TAKE ONE

the film magazine

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– N.Y. Times

"SOMETHING TO THINK ABOUT-EVEN SEEING IS NOT BELIEVING"
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The Films of Orson Welles
Charles Higham

Despite the intensely personal flamboyance of his films, Orson Welles remains one of the most mysterious of directors. His interviews are filled with puzzling contradictions—and sometimes put-ons of gullible interviewers. His public image is diffused by his frequent appearances in grotesque roles in other men's films—often undertaken to pay the costs of the films he directs. To unravel the mysteries in Welles's career, Charles Higham has carried out a Citizen Kane-style investigation on Welles himself, talking to all his major collaborators and patiently tracing hitherto shadowy aspects of Welles' work. He gives a detailed account of *Too Much Johnson*—Welles's first film. He tells the story of Welles's vexed, never-completed Latin American epic, *It's All True*, of which he has inspected the sole remaining footage. He discusses an unknown TV film, *The Fountain of Youth*. A chapter is devoted to each Welles film, giving the circumstances of its production and analyzing its dramatic structure and stylistic strategies. Behind Welles's bold deployment of deep-focus photography and supple sound montage Higham finds a persistent concern with themes of time and loss. The book is lavishly illustrated, and many of its illustrations have never been published; they include revelatory production stills, shots from the unknown films, and copious stills from all of Welles's films.

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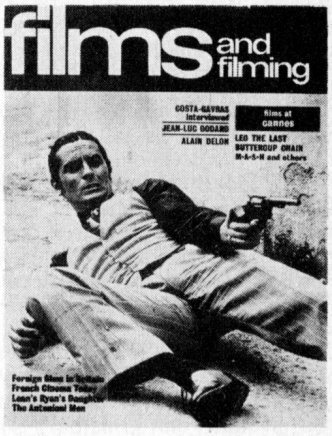

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FEED-BACK

***TAKE ONE** welcomes communications from its readers, but can rarely accommodate letters over 500 words in length. The editors assume that any letter received (unless otherwise stated) is free for publication.*

In his comments on the second episode of **Lucia**, Geoffrey Minish (Vol. 2, No. 6) seems to have gotten his decades alarmingly confused. First he tells us that it takes place in *1923* (which would fit well enough with "Poor Butterfly" and "Smiles" being played by an orchestra in the story—maybe they took awhile to get to Cuba!) But then he says that he prefers the second episode to the first because of his "streak of *1930s* cultism"! Also he says that "it has been suggested that Solas was trying for a pastiche of the Hollywood *1930s* look"—then in the same sentence, apparently on the basis of this, he invokes "early *Huston*"! Since all the early Huston films came out in the *1940s*, well! What's up, Mr. Minish?

G.G. Patterson
Toronto

Today we received our copy of Vol. 2, No. 7. While perusing the articles, we noticed on page 24 an article titled "Overlooked & Underrated", in which Mr. Blumer writes about the film **The Saragosa Manuscript**. I must say that I am very disappointed to find out that a publication such as *Take One* misinforms its readers and, even more, jeopardizes the reputation of its clients. Just where Mr. Blumer gathers his information is unknown to us, but one thing we know is that the information concerning **The Saragosa Manuscript** and Zodiak Films is wrong, damageable to us and, furthermore, could cause Zodiak a lot of trouble.

For your information, the North American distribution rights for **The Saragosa Manuscript** are held by two different companies: the French distribution belongs to a Canadian company and the English distribution is handled by an American company and Zodiak is not involved at all. If Mr. Blumer's article should stir a reaction from either company, we will be forced to hold Mr. Blumer responsible for his allegations.

Furthermore his remark: "unfortunately a common occurrence in the mindless racket known as film distribution", is not appreciated here at all and is damaging to our good and well-established reputation as a dependable film distributor in Canada. May we add that those involved in the so-called "mindless racket known as film distribution" are hard-working people who, by placing their advertising in *Take One* magazine, allow Mr. Blumer to express his ideas and thus earn his bread and butter.

Wanda Gavsie, President
Zodiak International Productions
Montreal

After all the critical hurrahs, **Goin' Down the Road** is a disappointment in varying degrees to anyone who expects a finished, professional package. Considering the cost ($85,000?) and the inexperience of the director, it's a remarkable job—as an entry in the cheap film field, it ranks high. But with no allowances such as the foregoing, it founders either as documentary or neo-realist entertainment. Apparently the director himself didn't know which he was making.

Apart from predictable flaws (predictable in an $85,000 colour film) of fair-to-poor colour and a cliché-ridden script (who wants to hear the monotonous clichés of everyday speech reproduced on film?), **Goin' Down the Road** suffers from that unforgiveable fault: it is dull. The two "heroes" are as colourless and common a pair as have "starred" in a film for some time. Not to mention the situations. Certainly, these types and situations exist and are only too familiar. But it then follows, why bother to film something so familiar, in such a straight, uninventive way? This is where the director's limited experience in documentaries shows through. He tells it like it is, when these banal situations and stereotyped characters cry out for imaginative rendering to disguise their extravagantly uninteresting lives. Realism may be the basis of art, but it must be subjected to selection, arrangement, etc., to pass from mere reporting to art.

One of the more unfortunate results of the probably wide distribution this film will have is that it will verify in many minds the well-circulated belief that Canadians are among the dullest people in the world. The director has used a dull, uninventive technique to show dull, extremely circumscribed characters in dull, well-trodden situations. Where the virtue lies in such a performance escaped this viewer.

H. Francis
London, Ont.

[Don Shebib's **Goin' Down the Road** has just been acquired by Chevron Pictures (165 West 46th Street, NYC 10036) for distribution in the United States.—Ed.]

Joe Kane's article on "Nuclear Films", (Vol. 2, No. 6), that curious preoccupation of the American cinema in the 1950's, made for very interesting reading. As a supplement, here's a list of some of the directors left unnamed:

Atomic Brain, 1964, D. Joseph Mascelli. Also entitled **Monstrosity.**

Creature With the Atom Brain, 1955, D. Edward L. Cahn. One of these days someone is going to have to do a study of Cahn; his career goes as far back as Allen Dwan's.

Indestructible Man, 1956, D. Jack Pollexfen.

Beginning of the End, 1957, D. Bert I. Gordon. Another interesting career; a poor man's Corman, if that's possible.

Target Earth, 1954, D. Sherman Rose.

World Without End, 1956, D. Edward Bernds.

Night the World Exploded, 1957, D. Fred F. Sears.

Invasion USA, 1953, D. Alfred E. Green.

That still leaves five uncredited. Any memorabilia addicts out there?

Howard Curle
Winnipeg

[The remaining uncredited films are **Beast with One Million Eyes** (1956), **Bride of the Monster** (1956), **This Is Not a Test** (1962), **Captive Women** (1952), and **Cape Canaveral Monsters** (1960). A free two-year subscription (or extension to an existing subscription) to the first person who correctly identifies the directors of all five films—Ed.]

We want to thank Susan Rice very much for her review of our film **Adam at Six a.m.**

As it is our first producing effort, reviews like the one she wrote mean a great deal to us and will help get our next picture before the cameras.

Rick Rosenberg
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A small correction and point of information for your readers who may want to learn more about American Documentary Films. We have just published a new catalogue of over 150 films and have expanded our media services to include posters, lp records, and a free tape exchange. We are also distributing WITHDRAW, an illustrated pamphlet outlining the dishonorable conduct of the U.S. in Indochina and the threat of nuclear war should Nixon's policies go unchecked. Readers may request catalogues from ADF at 379 Bay St., San Francisco, Calif. 94133, or 336 W. 84th St., New York, N.Y. 10024.

John Downey
San Francisco

classifieds

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Cameraman, Soundman, Editors wanted by expanding film company in Toronto. Please supply resumé to Dept. CL, Take One Magazine, Box 1778, Station B, Montreal 110, P.Q.

NEWS

The late-September opening (at Lyon's Shopping Center, Basking Ridge, N.J.) of the newest Jerry Lewis Cinema high-lighted a mother—complete with teen-age children

hohohohohohohoho

Is Christmas driving you up the tree? See page 16 for a helpful suggestion.

hohohohohohohoho

—who carried a can of obscene films (destroyed) which were buried under the cornerstone as part of the opening ceremonies. Publicist Ted Baldwin explained that the event was designed to dramatize the Company's **"anti-film pollution"** policy, with its emphasis on "family" fare only.

Billy and Antoinette Edwards, stars of the controversial Allan King film, **A Married Couple**—which put the cinematic spyglass to their troubled and shaky marriage—have announced that they are planning to divorce.

An advertisement in a recent issue of *Variety* (without comment):

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The United States Directory has just published the sixth edition of its *Guide to the American Left,* containing over 5000 listings of social protest, liberal, pacifist, socialist, communist, new left and movement organizations and periodicals, complete with zip codes. Also included is an extensive bibliography of several hundred publications on or about the American Left-Wing. Copies are available (United States Directory, P.O. Box 1832, Kansas City, Mo. 64141) at $5.00 each. USD also publishes a similar *Guide to the American Right:* 3000 listings for $3.00.

In Washington, the Federal Communications Commission has issued its first approval of a **pay television** technical system, granting backing to Zenith Radio Corp.'s "Phonevision" subscription system, which involves the broadcasting of a scrambled tv picture and sound signal. Subscribers rent a device that does the unscrambling. Previous to this, the FCC has approved only experimental applications of the pay television principle.

Laser Film Corp., headed by Joseph (**The Balcony, Ulysses,** and **Tropic of Cancer**) Strick, has announced that it will begin production on the world's first **hologram motion picture.** A script has yet to be acquired, but Strick indicated interest in the Brecht play, *Life of Galileo* (which Paramount owns), or a horror story. The first film will have a budget of about $1 million and will (for technical reasons) be in b & w.

Since its inception 20 months ago, the Orson Welles Cinema in Cambridge, Mass. has presented the Greater Boston community with a number of innovations. Most recently, they have announced the formation of a **Film School,** which will offer lecture courses and practical filmmaking workshops. Full information is available from: The Film School, Orson Welles Cinema, 1001 Massachusetts Avenue, Cambridge, Mass. 02138.

A motion picture giving a microscopic view of the circulation of the blood **within a living heart** has been produced by two researchers at the University of Southern California.

Universal Education and Visual Arts (221 Park Avenue South, NYC 10003; 212-777-6600) announces the release of three new full-colour motion pictures on filmmaking and filmmakers: **The Cinematographer, The Director,** and **The Production Manager.** Using *cinéma vérité* techniques, each film follows the daily activities of a typical subject, showing "the highly refined professional techniques, the sudden emergencies, the quick decisions, the limitations of budget..." For sale or rent.

FESTIVALS & COMPETITIONS

A film program is being organized for the White House Conference on Children which will be held in Washington December 13-18 of this year. Four thousand people are expected to attend and festivals of **films for, by and about children** will be one of the feature attractions. Information on any such films should be sent to Victor Margolin, Children and Youth, P.O. Box 19, Washington, D.C. 20044, who will then request preview prints of the films which might be appropriate for Conference use.

The Public Relations Society of America sponsors the **Public Relations Film Festival** (November 15-18) at the Regency Hyatt House in Atlanta, Ga.

Temple University will hold its fourth annual **Anthropological and Documentary Film Conference,** March 10-13 1971, with workshops in still and motion picture techniques, sound recording, video tape and multi-media approaches to teaching. Plus screenings of documentary and anthropological films, for which the submission deadline is January 15. For more information write: Film Conference, c/o PIEF, Room 200 South Hall, Temple University, Philadelphia, Pa. 19122.

The First International **Erotic Film Festival** is to be held in San Francisco, Dec. 1-6. Competition (with $4000 total available in prizes) is now open for "quality erotic film" in 8mm, 16mm, and 35mm from anywhere in the world. Jurors are publisher Maurice Girodias and filmmaker Bruce Conner. Fuller details: First International Erotic Film Festival, 369 Sutter Street, San Francisco 94108 (415-391-6658).

The New Hampshire Network has been designated by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting as the Eastern Center for Creative Cinematography. CPB grants in varying amounts will be administered by the Center for the **support of film projects** to be selected by a panel of judges. Films may be b&w or color, in 16mm, and be anywhere up to 30 minutes long. Write: L.J. Presti, Director, Center for Creative Cinematography, New Hampshire Network, Box Z, Durham, N.H. 03824.

Film-70, A Festival of the People is to take place in late December. It is specifically designed to provide new filmmakers in the non-commercial class with a medium of exposure to the public, as well as to further the festival's cause: "world liberation". A three-day marathon screening will present all entries to the New York filmgoing public. Deadline for notice of participation is Dec. 11. For further information and entry forms, write: Film-70, P.O. Box 291, Cooper Station, New York, NY 10003.

The International Film Festival in Mental Retardation will be held (in conjunction with the Conference on Action for the Retarded) March 27 through April 1, in Dublin. A preliminary judging will be held at Parsons State Hospital and Training Center, Parsons, Kansas, in the first few weeks of December. Only 16mm films can be accepted and there are no cash awards. For more data: International Film Festival in Mental Retardation, Attn: Mr. Wade I. Ramsey, Coordinator, Audio-Visual Department, Parsons State Hospital and Training Center, 2601 Gabriel, Parsons, Kansas 67357.

The **Canadian International Amateur Film Festival** is to be held again in 1971 (deadline for receipt of entry forms is March 5). Cash awards of several hundred dollars apiece in each of several categories, plus public exhibition in at least four Canadian cities, go to the winners. Open to amateur filmmakers anywhere in the world. For full information contact: The Festival Director, CIAFF, Box 3583, Station "C", Hamilton, Ontario.

archive 2021

THE BOYS ON THE BANDWAGON

BY GENE D. PHILLIPS

Not too many years ago one New York drama critic complained that due to social and theatrical conventions, homosexual life could not be "as fully dramatized or as frankly treated in our drama as it is in contemporary fiction." Then in the spring of 1968 came **The Boys in the Band** which made a real breakthrough in behalf of an honest treatment of homosexual life on the stage. And now the film version has accomplished the same breakthrough on the screen.

The author of **Boys**, Mart Crowley, has said that he had no intention of espousing a social cause or starting a trend when he wrote his play: "Homosexuality used to be a sensational gimmick. The big revelation in the third act was that the guy was homosexual, and then he had to go offstage and blow his brains out." This does not normally happen in life and that is why it does not happen in **The Boys in the Band**. "If you once get over the fact that eight of the nine characters are overt homosexuals, you know the most sensational thing about it."

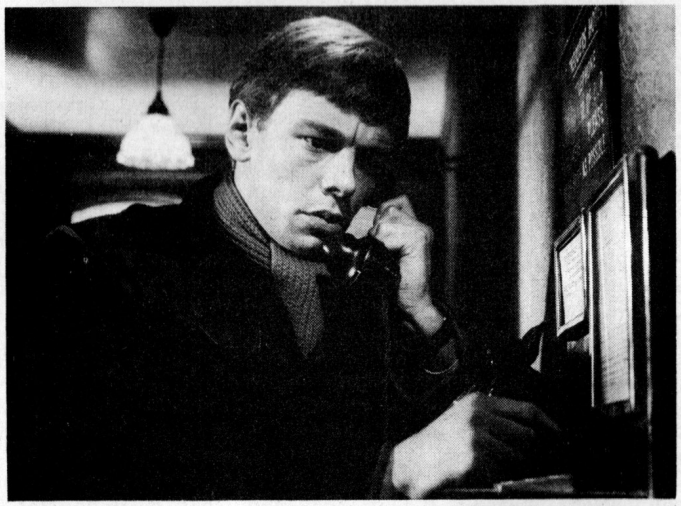
Nonetheless Crowley had great difficulty finding a producer for his play and just as much difficulty finding backing for the film even in the wake of the play's phenomenal stage success, for the film medium has always been more reticent in dealing with a topic like homosexuality than the theater. Movie versions of plays or novels that treated homosexual material were either completely or partially revamped to obscure this ingredient of the story. For example, the homosexual murder victim of Richard Brooks' novel **Crossfire** became a Jew in the 1947 film version, thus giving the whole story a theme about anti-Semitism that Brooks had never envisioned. By the same token, when Tennessee Williams's **Streetcar Named Desire** was brought to the screen in 1952, references to the traumatic experienee in the past of Blanche Dubois (Vivien Leigh) centering around her discovery that her husband was homosexual were so veiled that the incident became much more enigmatic than Williams had ever intended it to be (if not completely incomprehensible).

Deborah Kerr, who starred in both the stage and screen versions of Robert Anderson's **Tea and Sympathy** (1957) once told me how disappointed she was with the revisions in the motion picture: "They should have waited a few years to make the film. They had to obscure the idea that Tom Lee was homosexual by making the basis of the gossip about him the fact that he was somewhat effeminate. Now homosexuality is a topic of conversation and the film could be made honestly. It was not, after all, about homosexuality so much as it was about prejudice and gossip in a small college town."

The screen version the following year of Tennessee William's **Cat on a Hot Tin Roof** managed to muddle the relationship between the Paul Newman character and his old school chum in much the same way as Blanche Dubois's husband was treated in **Streetcar**. But Williams had much better luck when Gore Vidal's script for Manckiewicz's **Suddenly Last Summer** in 1960 met the problem squarely by treating homosexuality on the screen more frankly than it had ever been handled in a Hollywood film before, although screen historians are already pointing out that the film was at pains to emphasize the hideous death of Sebastian — the homosexual — at the hands of the cannibals (whom he had originally goaded into sexual encounters with him) in order to "justify" the film's depicting a story with homosexual implications in the first place.

Otto Preminger's **Advise and Consent** (1962) is a good example of what Mart Crowley referred to as the kind of story that uses homosexuality as the sensational revelation at the end wherein the hero is discovered to be homosexual and must obligingly commit suicide. Don Murray had the thankless job of trying to play the Senator who has guarded his homosexual past even from his wife as a life-like human being, but the heavyhanded script was against him. So was the heavyhanded direction of Preminger, who milked the gay bar scene for all it was worth, but offered no insight or understanding into the plight he was portraying.

Meanwhile, in England, filmmakers were beginning to treat homosexuality with more understanding and directness than was possible at that time in American films. Basil Dearden's **Victim!** (1961) was a frank and serious look at the social and psycholo-



Victim

gical pressures on the homosexual in England. Specifically, the plot was geared to point out the vulnerability to blackmail of anyone suspected of being homosexual, as it presented the plight of a respected barrister (Dirk Bogarde) who befriends a lonely young vagrant (Peter McEnery) who in turn kills himself in a futile attempt to save the barrister's reputation. When I asked Mr. Dearden if he thought that **Victim!** had influenced audiences

---

Gene D. Phillips teaches literature and film at Loyola University in Chicago. He is an associate of the National Center for Film Study and has lectured widely on film in America and Europe. He has served on a jury at the Cannes Film Festival, and on a panel at the Berlin Film Festival. Phillips' articles have appeared in respected periodicals in the US, Canada, France, England and Ireland.

6 Illustration by Ingrid Schulman

to try to gain a better understanding of the problems which face the homosexual, he replied: "People's minds cannot be changed by a movie. Problems or points of view can be expressed but that is all. Though **Victim!** pleaded tolerance for homosexuals, I am sure it never converted a single person to the cause it espoused. While myself not being homosexual, I have many friends that are who are charming and intelligent people. Even if they weren't I would still plead tolerance for them."

Tony Richardson's **Taste of Honey** (1961) presented a delicately nuanced story of a young girl (Rita Tushingham) who is deserted by her irresponsible mother after she has become pregnant with an illegitimate child, and is cared for by a shy homosexual (Murray Melvin) during the time of her approaching confinement with the kind of consideration which she never received from her mother. The story was told with a reticence that explored but did not exploit the material, and the same can be said for Canadian director Sidney J. Furie's English film **The Leather Boys** (1963) in which the hero begins to look for sympathy in an old pal when his marriage to a girl as immature as himself (again played by Rita Tushingham) begins to turn sour. What he is really doing in turning to his friend is attempting to relive his adolescence; and without his knowing it, their relationship begins to take on a dimension of which he is naively unaware.

Despite the fact that directors in Britain were thus employing homosexuality as a plot device in their films, in America it still looked as if homosexuality would become the exclusive province of underground filmmakers like Andy Warhol's clan and Kenneth Anger. Anger had made **Fireworks** (1947) while he was still in high school, a fifteen-minute sado-masochistic fantasy which is climaxed by a shooting roman candle serving as a phallic symbol. In 1966 he made his celebrated **Scorpio Rising**, which is twice as long and twice as searing in its uncompromising look into the milieu of the homosexual motorcycle cult.

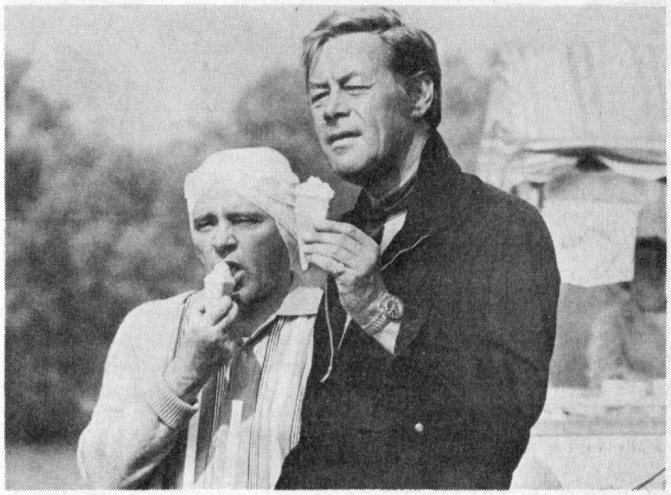
In 1967, Frank Simon made a brilliant documentary called **The Queens** centered around a group of homosexual transvestites participating in a beauty contest at New York's Town Hall. The M.C. and organizer of the contest, Jack Doroshow, serves as narrator of the sixty-minute film, and his straightforward commentary effectively reinforces the telling images on the screen as we watch a group of young men who have retreated into an unreal world of fantasy. "You ask a queen, 'What's your name?' " Doroshow says at one point, "And the queen says, 'Monique', and you say, 'That's marvelous, darling, and what was your name before?', and the queen will look you straight in the eye and say, 'There was no name before' "

The best feature-length underground film so far to deal with homosexuality is **Flesh** (1967), which Paul Morrissey directed under the Warhol banner. After a long run in theaters on this side of the Atlantic the film recently opened in one of the London cinema clubs (which are not under the jurisdiction of the British censor), where it gained widespread free publicity when it was seized by the police and then returned to the theatre for exhibition when the censor, among other officials, refused to support a court action against the film. Although he would not grant **Flesh** a certificate for commercial exhibition, the censor, Mr. John Trevelyan, told me that he felt the film had an insight and understanding in treating of a male hustler and the kind of customers with which he deals unmatched by any film of its kind. Without a doubt it is the only Warhol film so far to make a try at character study.

In the American commercial market, Hollywood was still trailing behind the maturity of British films and American underground films in its efforts to deal sensibly with homosexuality in the cinema. John Huston's **Reflections in a Golden Eye** (1967) most regrettably transferred Carson McCuller's novel to film with all the compassion for human frailty of a police report. Miss McCuller's vision of the human condition, as personified in the twisted lives of a middle-aged homosexual and his neurotic wife (Marlon Brando and Elizabeth Taylor), somehow got mislaid somewhere between page and screen. Equally superficial was **The Detective** (1968), which pleaded tolerance for homosexuals by having Frank Sinatra deliver what amounts to a sermon near the end of the film, with simplistic statements about how society makes homosexuals feel more guilty about being homosexual than about committing murder. **Victim!** had said it all much better some years earlier.

A significant move in the right direction for American cinema was John Flynn's **The Sergeant** (1968), which starred Rod Steiger as an older soldier who, like Brando in **Reflections**, is infatuated with an enlisted man (John Philip Law). Because he will not admit even to himself the basis of the relationship, it destroys him. The film does not try to condone the sergeant's behavior, but the attempt to enlist the audience's sympathy with the desperate struggles of a flawed fellow human being is movingly apparent. True to the Hollywood formula, however, Steiger was required to blow his brains out upon discovering his homosexual tendencies.

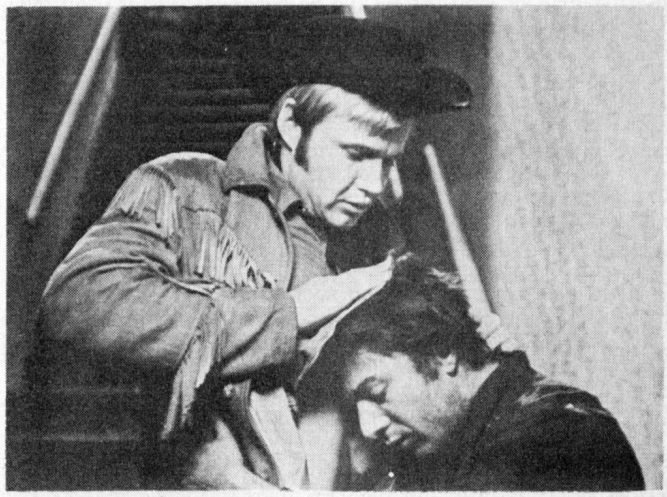
Finally, when the Motion Picture Association of America (MPAA) instituted a rating system in late 1968 calculated to exclude children from adult films, filmmakers in the American industry bacame freer than ever before to make frank films and thus to take up previously taboo subjects like homosexuality with more candor. Stanley Donen filmed Charles Dyer's play **Staircase** (1969) with Rex Harrison and Richard Burton as two aging homosexual barbers. Asked why he took the role, Harrison



Staircase

said: "The story is really about loneliness and human failure. These two subjects are so much a part of everyone's life that most people will not, or do not, recognize their presence. I would like to hope that in **Staircase** I can shed a little more light on these universal frailties." Nevertheless the previous screen image of both superstars militated against an audience's accepting them as two miserable and middle-aged queers. That is one reason, incidentally, why Mart Crowley insisted that the film of **Boys in the Band** use the original Broadway cast, none of whom would be familiar to movie audiences and who could thus be submerged in their roles.

The most successful American film — financially as well as artistically — to treat homosexuality prior to **Boys in the Band** has been British director John Schlesinger's **Midnight Cowboy** (1969). Joe Buck (Jon Voight) comes from Texas to New York with the hope of being a stud for rich and lonely la-



Midnight Cowboy

dies but winds up hustling men in order to get money to take his ailing friend Ratso Rizzo (Dustin Hoffman) to Florida for his health. Although Joe and Ratso move in a milieu inhabited by homosexuals, Schlesinger says that his point was to show how two men can have a meaningful friendship without being homosexual. Asked why he thought homosexuality was becoming

more common on the screen, he replied, "It comes from what's happening all around us. Everybody does more or less what he wants to these days, and films are a reflection of that attitude; homosexuality is just one part of the whole scene."

What makes **Boys** different from the plays and films which preceded it in dealing with homosexuality is that it presents the invert in his own environment and not just as a misfit in the heterosexual world. Hence there is a chance to explore the peculiar problems, psychological and social, which confront him when he tries to live at peace with himself in his own world.

The Boys in the Band

"I got the title from those movie musicals in the 1940's where Frances Langford or Peggy Lee or somebody was always saying, 'Let's have a great big hand for the boys in the band'," says Crowley. "It means, 'men in the minority', something like that."

The plot centers around a birthday party given for a homosexual named Harold (Leonard Frey) by his friend Michael (Kenneth Nelson) and attended by a group of friends who represent a variety of homosexual types (not stereotypes). For instance, the fact that one homosexual is Catholic, another Jewish, and another Negro indicates that homosexuality touches all groups. Michael, the Catholic, can neither live with or without his religion any more than he can live with or without his homosexuality. "I'm one of those truly rotten Catholics, who gets drunk, sins all night and goes to Mass the next morning," he says.

Crowley treats Michael and the others with just this perfect blend of compassion mixed with wry wit throughout the film. For example, the midnight cowboy (Robert La Tourneaux) who is Harold's "birthday present" from one of the guests, is a target for humor throughout the play (as when he is told to stand in the corner with the other gifts); but underlying the conception of his character is the pathetic situation of a young man like Joe Buck who has looks and little else and knows it. Michael's unhappiness at being homosexual drives him to make jokes at the expense of himself and his homosexual friends, and even to try to make an old college chum from Georgetown University who happens in on the party admit that he too is homosexual — as if adding one more member to the ranks will somehow make Michael feel less an outsider. Michael epitomizes his feelings about being homosexual in the now-famous line, "Show me a happy homosexual and I'll show you a gay corpse."

Crowley has been criticized by homosexuals for presenting them from an unflattering angle. He counters, "The story is about self-destruction. I am talking about the self-destructive angle that's in homosexuals who flagellate themselves and demean themselves out of self-hatred because they've been so shunted aside and considered such freaks by society....I hope there are happy homosexuals — they just don't happen to be at this party. Besides Michael is too often taken as the spokesman for all the others. He is really the one truly unhappy person among the nine; all of them have complex natures and have their own feelings about being homosexual."

In transferring **Boys in the Band** to the screen, the film's director William Friedkin (**The Night They Raided Minsky's**) had the good sense to realize that the play's success stemmed not so much from the fact that it dealt with homosexuality but from the fact that "it's well constructed, with brilliantly drawn characters, witty dialogue, and a gripping denouement. To hoke it up with unnecessary location shots, flashy photography or background music would have been wrong." Adds Mart Crowley, "A film does not add variety to a scene by simply breaking up dialogue from the play with four different location backgrounds. The variety must come within the scene by photographing the action from different points of view."

Hence Friedkin has not attempted to "open out" the play for the screen beyond introducing each of the guests in their own proper milieu before they go to the party. This is not to say that the director has not exploited the potential of the film medium to create the atmosphere of the story. The early scenes are played in gray light, he points out, towards the end of a day that is threatening rain. When the party actually begins on the terrace of Michael's apartment, the light fades to dusk, at which point Michael turns on a string of lanterns that give the terrace "a warm, nostalgic glow". Then, when bitchiness takes hold and tension mounts between the characters, it begins to rain, "driving the guests inside where the hostilities pour forth." From this point onward Friedkin employs more close-ups and hand-held shots: "I want the audience to be another guest at the party," he explains, " to be involved, as they were in **Faces**, not simply passive observers." It would be difficult not to be involved in a story so sensitively written and directed.

Another indication that the screen has come a long way since the days of **Streetcar Named Desire** and **Tea and Sympathy** is the British screen adaptation of Joe Orton's play **Entertaining Mr. Sloane** which followed almost immediately on the release of **Boys in the Band**. Peter McEnery, who played the shy homosexual in **Victim!**, here appears in the title role as a young man who trades on his attractiveness to a middle-aged brother and sister named Kath and Ed (Beryl Reid and Harry Andrews) in order to secure free room and board. Like all of the work of Orton's short career, this is black comedy and has been played as such in the film. The acting is broad, the costumes and decor suitably outlandish, in keeping with the fact that the characters are more grotesques than human beings, and as a result the film is at times irresistably funny.

Entertaining Mr. Sloane

It looks for a while as if Sloane is going to rule the household as Kath and Ed both vie for his affections until, in a fit of rage, Sloane murders their meddling father. That puts them in the position of being able to blackmail him into staying on under their mutual domination indefinitely: they make an arrangement whereby they shall take turns "entertaining Mr. Sloane". **Sloane** is the first film by British TV director Douglas Hickox and, like Friedkin, he has concentrated more on rendering the play on the screen in the spirit in which Orton wrote it rather than in enlarging the canvas against which the action is played. He and his cast have achieved ensemble acting of a high order, but one shudders to think what could have happened to this material in the hands of an unsubtle and heavyhanded director.

Now that **Boys in the Band** has helped to create an atmosphere in which homosexuality and other social and psychological problems can be treated frankly and with integrity on the screen, let us hope that we are not in for a run of films that merely exploit homosexuality and allied subjects as the fad of the moment. This is just what happened after **Boys in the Band** was successful on the stage, when a lot of boys jumped on the bandwagon and treated theater audiences to a spate of fairly inferior plays on the topic. A good film like **Boys** treats homosexuality not as a curiosity but as part of the human condition. From such works we can learn what a character in a recent Broadway play said that she has learned about homosexuals: that they are "sad and mixed up — like the rest of us."

THE BIRTH AND DEATH OF THE CZECH NEW WAVE

BY JOSEF SKVORECKY

The Czechoslovak New Wave which reached the West at the beginning of the sixties came as sort of a surprise to many movie-goers on this continent. At that time, the not overinformed public harbored two notions, namely that Czechoslovakia, being an East European country (political schizophrenia has long ago replaced strict geography in most people's minds), cannot be very advanced in the more technological arts, and, secondly, that because Czechoslovakia was a socialist country, "socialist realism" was the enforced "school" there—meaning the concocting of a sort of industrial fairy-tale for adults. Both these notions, like so many beliefs about the way of life in far-away countries, were not accurate.

Like France, Germany or Denmark, Czechoslovakia, too, even if to a lesser extent, was a pioneering country in filmmaking, and one of the greatest commercial film producers between the two World Wars. The first silent comedies were made in Bohemia as early as 1898; on the eve of World War I. A lively industry was already thriving in several small studios in Prague; in 1933 the Barrandov Studios were built, at that time the most modern in Europe, so that before the Nazis invaded the country in 1939 the yearly output of the two major Czech studios had been between 40 and 52 feature films.

The quality of most of those movies was, of course, low; but in this respect Czechoslovakia was no exception: besides its worthless entertainments, the industry could boast of quite a few remarkable films, some of which attained wide international acclaim: eg. Gustav Machaty's **Ecstasy** (1932), remembered now chiefly for its unveiling of Hedy Lamarr (Hedvika Kiesler then) but surprisingly unfaded, even after many years.

In 1945 the studios were nationalized. The following era, between 1945 and 1969, may perhaps be viewed as one long (and eventually convincing) proof that a combination of a socialist economy with a democratic freedom of the arts could be a good answer to the problems of an art-form that needs a lot of money to create finished products.

Four factors led to the situation which, in the early sixties, gave birth to that miraculous child: the Czech New Wave. First: the nationalization of the industry brought an end to the financial worries of the director—which was the first prerequisite for raising the level of quality. The second factor was the founding, in 1947, of the Prague Film Academy. What was most important about this school were the regular weekly showings of excellent old films from the well-stocked files of the Prague Film Archive, and also of good contemporary Western films (sent to Prague, originally, for showing to the Film Trade Board which rejected most of them for public distribution; but before they were sent back, the Academy snatched them for a "research showing" in the school's little cinema). The students, therefore, unlike the general public, acquired a solid knowledge both of the history and of the contemporary trends in the movies, and hence became immunized against the third factor in the game.

Josef Skvorecky is one of Europe's leading novelists. He also wrote numerous essays and detective stories during those periods when, because of the Czech political climate, his novels and short stories were not accepted for publication. He has written three screenplays and has lectured on Czech films and literature at Cornell University and the University of California at Berkeley. He now teaches at the University of Toronto and his novel, *The Cowards*, has just been published by Grove Press.

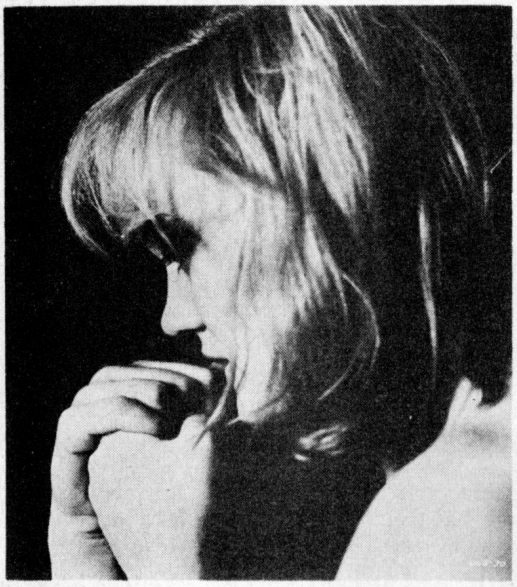
This was the imposition of the more-or-less obligatory esthetics of "socialist realism" in its most primitive form on a nation nurtured on long and sophisticated artistic traditions. Actually, the era of the unlimited rule of the zhdanovite formula was very short—some five to six years (which is a fact generally unknown in the West). But in spite of this shortness of time, and due to a combination of genuine enthusiasm with cynical opportunism, the Barrandov studios managed to produce some of the most charming specimens of this ill-begotten genre. For example, **DS-70 Does Not Work**, a drama made in 1951, which had a gigantic excavator for its hero; a group of saboteurs tried to damage this good machine, but succeeded only partially, were exposed and arrested. Another gang of evil-doers was equally unsuccessful in **Great Opportunity** (1950); this time they were unmasked by a character named Tonda Buran (the name sounds in Czech approximataly like "Joe Hillbilly"), a former hooligan, who had been reformed by a jail-sentence so thoroughly that he became a model shock-worker (the Czech equivalent of a stachanovite).

Such, and similar, crudely pedagogical tall-tales were offered to a public who, from their own personal experiences, knew about the real problems of a transitional historical period, overshadowed, moreover, by the excesses of declining stalinism. Which points to the fourth factor, namely that the movie-goers soon lost interest in the home-product and turned to at first rare, later more frequent imports: to French, British and Italian comedies and to belated specimens of Italian neo-realism.

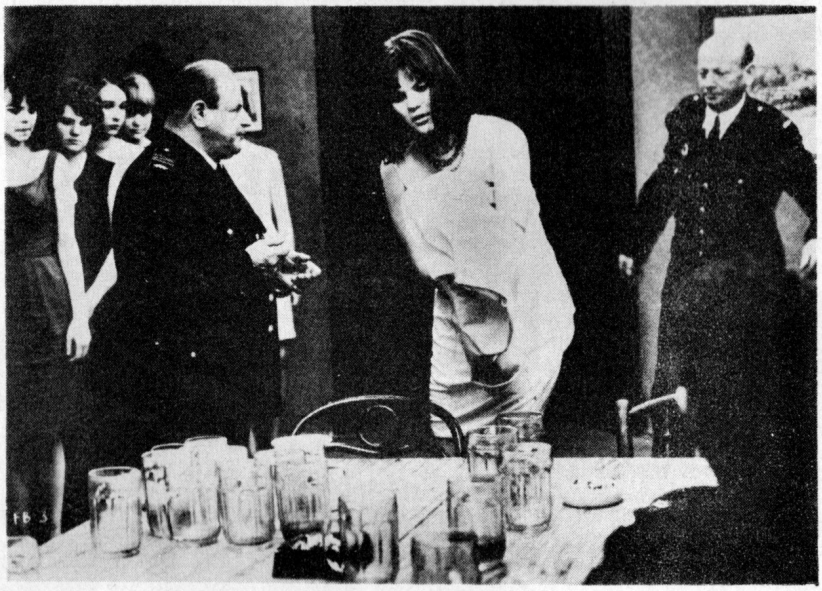
A truly dialectical situation was created: on the one hand the material resources at the disposal of filmmakers and the technical and artistic schooling of young adepts had never before been so good; on the other hand the esthetic and political limitations had (with the exception of the period of Nazi occupation) never been so narrow. The inevitable outcome of these contradictions was a rebellion. It started in the late fifties following the thaw after the 20th Congress of the CP of the USSR—with a few satirical comedies, reminiscent of the daring critical buffooneries of Mayakovskij's early stage satires, and with a few isolated hints at what the second, artistically more mature and critically deeper, stage would bring: e.g. the bitterly lyrical **Yearning** (1958); by Vojtech Jasny, or one little film by Ivo Novak, **The Cubs** (1957); based on a story and made from a screenplay by Milos Forman who also worked on this film as assistant director.

This first period ended eventually in disaster: in 1959, a whole package of the new films were subjected to a severe official criticism, resulting in bans, reprimands and dismissals (Jan Kadar, of the later **Shop on Main Street**, for instance, was forbidden to enter the studios for two years). The criticism, nurtured from surviving concepts of primitive socialist realism and strangely out of touch with both social and political reality, coincided with the graduation from the Academy of a large and uniquely talented group of students who got their first job at the Barrandov Studios determined to realize their own intentions rather than the nebulous visions of the official estheticians. The group was quite numerous; it included such by now internationally-known figures as Jaromil Jires (**The Cry, The Joke**), Hýnek Bocan (**Private Storm**), Juraj Herz (**The Burner of Bodies**), Jan Schmidt (**The End of August at the Hotel Ozone**), Pavel Juracek (**Joseph K.**), Antonin Masa (**Hotel for Strangers**), Frantisek Vlacil (**Marketa Lazarova**), and others.

Alas, the space limitations of a magazine article permit a more thorough examination of only a handful of the Group's



The Loves of a Blonde



The Firemens Ball

most successful members.

The most internationally-known among them is undoubtedly **MILOS FORMAN** (born 1932). He is a true originator: his style — though he has seen his neo-realists (namely Ermanno Olmi's **Il Posto**) and has thought about *cinéma-vérité*—is unmistakeably his own and genuinely Czech, in its marriage of high sensitivity to cruel satire. He has brought to life something which may be—and in Prague actually is—called "The Forman School"; the most prominent disciples being Ivan Passer (**Intimate Lighting**), his long-time assistant director and co-writer of all Forman's scenarios, and Jaroslav Papousek (**The Most Beautiful Age**), the author of the novel from which **Peter and Paula** was made and the third member of the Forman screen-writing team.

The key to the Forman style may be found in Forman's dispersed esthetic utterings. "All creative work," he writes in an article, "is essentially an improvisation...when we are writing a screenplay we try to visualize every situation from all possible (and impossible) angles...we change it again and again, we get ideas and dismiss them...so that the final scene, the one which gets written into the scenario, is just a last link of a continuous flow of improvised thoughts and ideas. However, a meticulous clinging to the scenario shows only the conceit of its authors who think that they were able to create a completely perfect set of characters, with their peculiar ways of speaking, thinking and behaviour." Therefore it is necessary to improvise even during the shooting of the film, with the help of all the participants of the process, in the first place with the help of the "non-actors". Forman hardly ever uses professional actors (and if he does, he tries to break their acting habits by surrounding them with crowds of amateurs: e.g. the young pianist in **Loves of a Blonde**). The professionals only contribute to the conceits of the screenwriter: "If I have a bad dialogue or a bad scene in my scenario, if it is naive, or even untruthful, a professional actor is able to inject it with an illusion of truthfulness, and thus covers up for my mistakes and imperfections. The better the actor, the better the camouflage for my stupidity. A non-actor is like a seismograph. Each mistake of mine creates an earthquake under his feet which makes him lose his balance. The falseness of the thing I have written shows then very ostentatiously."

Most of Forman's films are known in this country, and so a mere enumeration should suffice: his first feature, **Peter and Paula,** a humorous story about the conflict of generations, was made in 1963, together with two medium-length films which were then released as a feature under the title **Audition (1963)**; this was a half-documentary about the rock-craze of the early sixties, and (in the second story) about the traditional Czech brass bands. (The real-life leader of the band in the film, Mr. Vostrcil, became Forman's most successful non-actor—star of **Peter and Paula** and **Firemen's Ball** and of Passer's **Intimate Lighting**). In 1965 came **Loves of a Blonde,** and in 1967 **Firemen's Ball,** a cruel social satire which virtually demolished the organisation of volunteer firemen of Czechoslovakia upon whom the fire-defense of the country entirely depends. Besides these films Forman made a TV film, **The Well-Paid Walk** (1966), the screen adaptation of contemporary Czech Jazz-opera.

VERA CHYTILOVA (born 1929), the only woman in the Group, came actually a little earlier than Forman (if one dismisses his considerable contribution to **The Cubs,** made in 1957). In 1961 she directed a medium-length film, **The Ceiling,** the story of drop-out from medical school who makes a living as a mannequin; in 1962 she followed it with another medium-length production, **The Bag of Fleas,** a half-documentary about the love problems of young factory girls. In contrast to the highly personal style of Forman, these films reveal a much greater influence by *cinéma-vérité;* later Vera got rid of it, in exchange for a slightly eclectic and highly polished formalism (accompanied by a rare technical perfection), which, with the years, became more and more obvious. It was least noticeable in her first full-length feature **Another Way of Life** (1963), juxtaposing the mutually unrelated lives of two women, a successful gymnast and a common housewife, into a strange point-counter-point: it was more evident in **The Daisies** (1966), a clever portrayal of youth bent on provoking their elders who—in the young people's view—are responsible for the mess the world is in; and it culminated in **We Eat the Fruit of the Trees of Paradise** (1970), a pictorial poem (Vera's husband is Czechoslovakia's cameraman Number One) about the conflicts in the emotional life of contemporary people.

Perhaps the most "film-conscious" of the young directors is **JAN NEMEC** (born 1936). "The director must create his own world," he has said in an interview, "a world independent of reality, as it appears at the time. The painters have created their worlds, the composers too. But only a few film directors have achieved this aim: certainly Chaplin, certainly Bresson, and certainly Bunuel...If I try to make my film resemble the surface of reality I'll waste much energy and I'll lead the attention of the audience away from the heart of the matter. They will necessarily ask whether the film does not distort reality, whether things are exactly so in real life, or whether they are slightly different, etc. But if, from the first scene, it is apparent that any superficial resemblance to reality is not important at all, the audience will give up their favourite comparisons and concentrate on what the director really tries to convey."

Nemec's first feature, **Diamonds of the Night** (1964), was certainly not "realistic" in any usual sense of the word. It was perhaps the first attempt, since Bunuel's **Andalusian Dog**, to film states of mind rather than reality. Based on a story by Arnost Lustig, it tried to capture the hallucinatory delusions of two Jewish boys on the run from a "death march" at the end of World War II. Nemec's second feature, **The Party and the Guests** (1965), is a social and political parable satirizing, among other things, the "obligatory happiness" imposed on people in some dictatorial systems, and the mindlessness and indifference to the fate of others of contemporary man. The third feature, **Martyrs of Love** (1966), is a partly chaplinesque, partly surrealist pictorial phantasmagoria.

The philosopher of the Group is **EVALD SCHORM** (born 1931), the maker of a number of remarkable documentaries. His forte is the psychological analysis of modern man and his world: a penetrating, merciless, sometimes farcical and always sad unraveling of the not-so-nice facts behind the nice words of officialdom. The theme of **Courage for Every Day** (1964), is the cynical betrayal of ideals by former idealists: the tragicomic story of a shock-worker who refuses to cease living according to the rules laid down years ago by the revolutionaries; this at a time when those revolutionaries have long since changed into self-praising bureaucrats. An even more disturbing work was **The Return of the Prodigal Son** (1966), where one of the characters, using a subtly perverted dialectic, says after the hero's unsuccessful attempt at suicide: "You reject, on principle, any compromise...but your rejection springs from your distrust...of the great, impersonal, pure ideals which we have to work for, fight for, and sometimes even make compromises for." In his third, structurally most interesting and perhaps best film, **Five Girls Round Your Neck** (1967), the basic situation, from the point of view of orthodox socialist-realism, is full of sarcasm: in the old melodramas the rich girl would have been moody, spiteful and malicious, while her poorer friends would have been open-hearted and good. Here you have the sensitive and delicate girl from the villa, Natasa, the daughter of an influential functionary, trying to please her socially less lucky, and therefore spiteful and malicious companions by treating them to feasts of potato salad and soft drinks from the family refrigerator whenever her parents are not at home. Seeing her budding love affair ruined, out of pure envy, by her friends, she ceases to be the nice girl and hits back; she informs on her buddies to her influential father, and thus steps out on the road to social success.

Schorm's last released feature is the **End of a Priest** (1969), a farcical allegory of two different approaches to people—the humane and the bureaucratic one. It was based on a script written by myself, and I was also the author of a story from which **JIRI MENZEL**'s second film (his first film was part of another omnibus, **Pearls at Battom**), **Crime At a Girls' School** (1966), was made. By far the best of the three stories which together made a full-length film of that title, it was—in Menzel's treatment—a delightful parody of the crime-movie *genre,* starring a gang of Ronald-Searlean girls who call themselves the Kill Kitten Klan —Kitten being the name of their Math teacher. Of course, Menzel's big success was **Closely Watched Trains** (1966) for which he got the Oscar; it is too well known in this country to need any commentary. In 1967 Menzel filmed another excellent Czech short-novel by Vladislav Vancura (executed by the Nazis in 1942), **Capricious Summer**; unfortunately for the Western audience, the charm of this work rests mainly on the original language of the dialogue. In 1968 he produced another crime-allegory, **Crime at a Night Club,** based on my original story, and starring the popular Czech pop-artist Eva Pilarova (nicknamed "Fitz"pilar by her admirers; an allusion, of course, to the great Ella). In love with this blonde beauty, in the film, is the Minister of Interior of an unidentified State—but she bravely resists his offers of an advantageous romance. In the end, however, when her true love is sentenced to death—the victim, together with a friend, of a frame-up instigated by the Minister—she accepts the statesman's offer in exchange for a Letter of Pardon. The Letter is actually dispatched, carried by a very slow messenger; but the Minister, to make absolutely sure that the two sentenced men die before the letter gets into the hands of the executioner, sends his personal murderer after the messenger, with orders to finish him off, and so the two unfortunates stand under the gallows, hoping the messenger will arrive in time; the messenger slowly approaches the courtyard; the murderer guickly approaches the messenger—and...THE END.

This, then, is a very rough outline of the success story of the Czech films in the sixties. It seems to be a closed chapter now. A new chapter was started in March 1970 when the whole organisational structure of the studios was rebuilt, many personnel changes were made and some dismissals effected, and the shooting of a number of new films discontinued. Four already finished feature films—among them new full-length works by Jiri Menzel and Evald Schorm—were banned; it was, however, promised by a spokesman for the studios that these films would not be destroyed, but preserved for eventual showing in the future. The heads of the "production groups" (an equivalent of the capitalist producers) were mostly dismissed and new trends of development were sketched out by the new general director of the Barrandov studios, Mr. Stastny: while in the past years only about 6 films of the yearly output of some 30 films were in color, next year (1971) the Czech cinema-goers will have an opportunity to see no less than 17 home-made color movies. The 70 millimeter super-screen, up till now supplied exclusively by the West, will have its first Czech items and, in co-production with other socialist states, the Barrandov studios will produce their first super-films—a thing heretofore untried by Czech directors.

From all this one could gather that the Czech film industry is leaving the road which in the sixties led its directors to the first ranks of those concerned rather with creativity than with spectacularity. The road outlined by the new Barrandov boss appears to be the dangerous one taken some years ago by Hollywood which has now ended in both artistic and financial failure. Of the men and women of the New Wave, Milos Forman is at present editing his **Society for Parents of Fugitive Children**—at Movie Lab in New York—for Universal Pictures. He showed me parts of his roughly edited material. It would be premature to write a review before the film is really born; however, from what I have seen, I feel that this may be another case of what has happened several times in the history of

End of a Priest

We Eat the Fruit of the Trees of Paradise

archive 2021

America—namely that of foreigners uncovering parts of American life to Americans. The fragments I watched in the cutting-room correct—among other things—the popular notion (spread perhaps by manufacturers of electronic equipment) that music does not appeal to the very young, unless it is deafeningly noisy: in a true formanesque tradition the movie is full not only of lively, sometimes bizarre, sometimes charming and always humane faces but also of young people endowed with unexpected creativity. All songs in this movie are the work of boys and girls Milos found in the streets of New York, sung by themselves. The audio-visual compositions, which will probably make up great parts of the film, were to me persuasive proof that the similarities between youngsters of such vastly different worlds as the USA and the CSSR today, are far greater than the differences. The winged horses in one of the songs are surprisingly near to the imagination of the Czech poets (a native brand of surrealism) and the silently pretty face of the New York high school girl Linea Heacock, who plays the part of the lost daughter, reminded me strongly of the faces of youngsters I saw on that sad, forgotten day almost two years ago, carrying the coffin of Jan Palach. I felt like crying. Perhaps I come from a too sentimental people; or perhaps there is a good cause for crying in this unevenly happy, unevenly free and unevenly just world.

In Prague, of the leading men of the New Wave mentioned in this article, Vojtech Jasny started making a feature film—about the relations of people and dogs. Who was it who said, "The better I know men, the more I like dogs." Voltaire? Anyway—Jasny allegedly left the country this summer, abandoning the film in a semi-finished state to Evald Schorm who took on the job of completing it. Vera Chytilova, according to a article in the Catholic daily *Lidova demokracie,* is writing a senario with Iva Hercikova (the screen-writer of Schorm's **Five Girls Round Your Neck**) about the life of Bozena Nemcova, a classical Czech woman writer, contemporary and admirer of Charles Dickens. If the idea materializes the result could be interesting —after all, Bozena Nemcova was not only a writer of the first magnitude but also a very lonely (because female) rebel against Austro-Hungarian political tyranny, and against the tyranny of the super-victorian morals imposed on women in the Austrian monarchy; to this very day the more prudish school of scholars tries to hush up the fact that Bozena, though married (the choice was her father's, not her own) and mother of children, had several known lovers. Of course, the established society of her times rewarded her in full: cheated by her publisher and thus unable to make a decent living by writing books, she died of tuberculosis at the age of forty-two, before she could emigrate to the U.S. as, at one time in her life, she had planned to.

The others? Jan Nemec, according to the British journalist Micheal Kustow, is raising vegetables in his country house with his wife, the number one pop-singer Marta Kubisova, at present allegedly banned from TV, from recording studios and from publicly appearing in the capital and in other big cities: her offences include several recorded protest songs and a kiss she once gave to Alexander Dubcek in front of TV cameras. Jiri Menzel directs plays in the avant-garde theatre Cinoherni Klub. Ivan Passer is at present considering a story by Isaac Bashevis Singer for a film with Barbra Streisand, and Jan Kadar's US - made **The Angel Levine** has just been released: his next American movie will perhaps be a vehicle for the talents of Liza Minelli. Jaroslav Papousek, in Prague, has created an endearing and rather petty-bourgeois character, Mr. Homolka, in his second feature film **Ecce Homo Homolka** (1970) and is now preparing **Hogo-fogo Homolka** (**Big Shot Homolka**) the second part of what promises to become a series of Homolka entertainments; perhaps what the people need now, after thirty-two years of political upheavels, is a Czech Judge Hardy's Family. Jan Schmidt is finishing his **Bow of Queen Dorothy,** based on yet another story of the martyred writer Vladislav Vancura who seems surprisingly to appeal so much to a generation of directors too young to remember the days of Nazi occupation (Menzel: **Capricious Summer**; Vlàcil: **Markéta Lazorova**). Mr. Polednak, the deposed Barrandov director responsible for the break given to the New Wave years ago, has recently been—according to the London *Times*—arrested; the charge: antisocialist activities. According to the same source, he permitted the Barrandov laboratories to be used for developing and editing films made by numerous cameramen during the coming of the friendly tanks.

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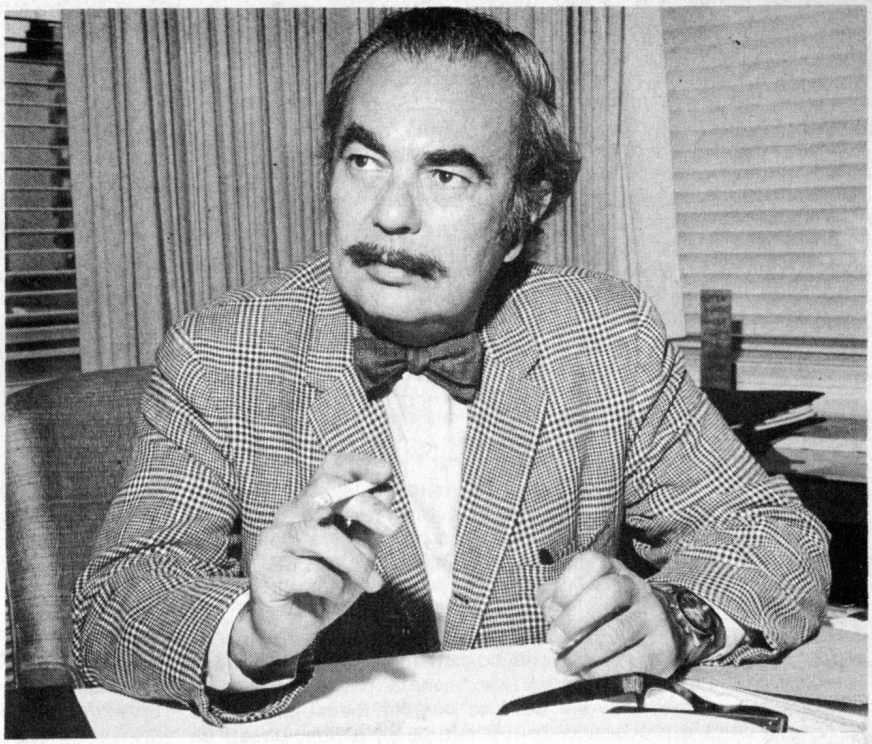

BY DUSTY VINEBERG

Seldom in Canada is an appointment greeted with the acclamation and anticipation evoked by Prime Minister Trudeau's recent announcement naming 53-year-old Sydney Newman god of the National Film Board.

The Board has been pregnant with trouble these last few years and there is wide recognition that a "creative midwife" of proven talent has at last been found, an impressario who will bring forth something besides crises, and who is eager, as he recently put it, "to be boss for the first time in my life, make all the decisions and totally carry a can."

The acclamation seems merely his due. It's a salute to "the little Jewish boy from Queen Street" (the wrong side of the Toronto tracks) who marched on England less than a decade ago and single-handedly conquered the staid and snobbish British Broadcasting Corporation.

Newman, the crude colonial, one English journalist called him—and later Newman magnanimously voted to give the fellow a job.

The crude colonial came to preside over BBC Drama, one of the greatest drama organizations in the world. He commissioned and produced the first on-air plays of Alun Owen, Harold Pinter, Angus Wilson, and Peter (*Hadrian VII)* Luke. He weaned BBC drama from its upper class, "Tennis, anyone?" preoccupations and steered it towards so-called kitchen-sink plays. His productions raked in awards.

And he was widely admired and respected to boot, even though it became clear, during the course of a BBC production of *Hamlet* that "Sydney didn't know the plot."

But his top English posts with both the private and public networks are by no means the only credentials of the new government film commissioner and NFB president.

He also held, years ago, top posts at the heart of production in both the CBC and the NFB. He was the latter's fifth employee, joining in July, 1941, three weeks ahead of the now-famous filmmaker, Norman McLaren.

And then, for the last eight months he has directed the program branch of the Canadian Radio-Television Commission in Ottawa—which makes sure Canada's broadcasters live up to the promises they make when they're granted their licences. He has himself had a hand in formulating some of the new promises of performance, especially those connected with the increase of Canadian content to 60 per cent.

This latter post, plus the earlier NFB and CBC service, add up to a grand slam of the positions and experience that would make him seem pretty ideal for his new job to anyone who believes a close relationship must soon be forged for the CBC and the NFB.

The 31-year-old Film Board has been in deep trouble for some time, some say since the fifties. Some say it never recovered the sense of purpose it had in World War Two under founder John Grierson, long since returned to Britain, from where he commutes to give courses in Film at McGill and western universities. Most recently the film board has been headed by university professor Dr. Hugo McPherson, who resigned in July to return to university life.

An appointee of former Secretary of State Judy LaMarsh, Professor McPherson's authority gradually eroded and he seemed to lose the confidence of his boss, Secretary of State Gérard Pelletier who reports to Parliament for the NFB.

The government's anti-inflation austerity program was no help. The NFB's 1970-71 budget was frozen at its 1969-70 level of $10 million, leading to staff layoffs which were drawn out and seemingly mismanaged. And they were bitterly fought by film-makers who marched on Parliament Hill one cold day last December to present their case—that more staff in production than in administration was fired.

In the end, only 10 production employees were actually fired although staff was further reduced when those who resigned, retired or changed jobs were not replaced. But the creative energies drained off by the crisis could have produced an epic film.

Farther back in time there was a history of deteriorated relations with the CBC, of CBC fiefdoms jealously guarded against feared NFB intrusions, of dislike and distrust on both sides which might be of small significance except that they meant no new NFB films have been shown on the CBC in prime time for years. There was a disastrous co-production agreement with the CBC which brought forth one film of doubtful quality and one unquestionable dud at considerable cost.

The Film Board still, *mirabile dictu,* garnered golden palms and blue ribbons in international competition. But tales persisted that other films were too lacklustre or irrelevant ever to be shown publicly, and that some took far too long, even years, to complete.

Now, enter Sydney Newman: He understands the problems—everybody's problems. The CBC wants audiences. The NFB needs distribution. The film-makers demand artistic freedom to express themselves.

For his part, the new president wants, like Charlie Chaplin on the office wall behind his desk, to touch everyone, "to *give* people something they . . . *just can't* . . . *get* . . . under ordinary circumstances," due to family or educational hangups.

And suddenly it all seems clear. To this end he will bend all the efforts of the Film Board. And that should give Canadians a pleasant sense of expectation. Because they are

Dusty Vineberg is a writer for the Montreal Star, where this article first appeared in slightly lengthier form. Reprinted by permission.

bound to reflect that as head of BBC drama, Sydney Newman was the man who commissioned *The Forsyte Saga,* one of the most popular programs in TV history.

So, when he says he has all sorts of ideas that fit absolutely the terms of the Film Act (under which the NFB has a mandate to interpret Canadians to the world and to each other), and yet have mass appeal, you believe him.

When he says he's going to try to develop new forms of documentaries, you get the idea they'll be exciting. When he says he wants to evolve groups of programs—"I don't want to sell single shots"—you remember that he developed *The Avengers,* with Steed and Mrs. Peel. And when he promises that NFB films will be shown on the CBC and will attract mass audiences, you're inclined to agree. Didn't Grierson once tell him he had a B-picture mentality? Newman says it was a compliment: after all, B-pictures were where the mass audience was, and that's what interests them both.

Possibly the most important of his aims is the clear determination to overcome all obstacles and enter into a close relationship with the CBC. Where others predict a barrage of flak, he sees no obstacles. Why? "Because I expect to overcome them." There's been a hassle recently over the question of commercial breaks in NFB films. The film-makers claim NFB films should not be interrupted by commercials. The CBC, hard pressed financially, says it can't clear prime time for films unless they have commercial breaks.

Newman says: "For better or worse. . .television in Canada is based on a commercial advertising system. If we expect to get audiences, I think we have to pay a great deal of attention to the price we have to pay for them—and if the price happens to be breaks in the middle of a film, based on my own background, and maybe it's a corrupt one, I will accept breaks."

But Norman McLaren is reported to have said the other day that it's barbaric to put commercials in NFB films.

"I *like* Norman for saying that and for believing it—but it all depends on the kind of film it is, the job it is supposed to do, the avenue of distribution and the number of audiences one hopes to get for it."

It ought to be apparent by now that the new NFB president is no purist. While some NFB staffers have insisted they'd rather have their films seen by miniscule audiences than sacrifice elements they believe essential, Newman says the mass audience is "the raison d'être of the whole thing." He says he'll urge the staff not to be so fussy about cinematic quality but to "get the nub of it," and be more concerned with humanity than with the finesses of technique: "I want more people in these films because we're wonderful, and I want the cameramen and directors to go looking and finding it and holding it aloft for the rest of us to see. This is the main thing."

Apropos of the what's-the-hurry? attitude of some Film Boarders, he declares that to him, "a deadline is god." Where did he pick up that attitude? "From television. When you're going to hit the air at 8 o'clock, kid. . .you're hitting the air at 8 o'clock! You can't have an empty space. That's my whole training."

And, adds the man who annually spent $19 million to produce 720 dramas a year and between 12 and 14 hours of BBC television drama weekly, "it's also good business practice."

Speaking of business practice, we had at last come to money, to the frozen and allegedly confining Film Board budget, and to Newman's own unfrozen salary which had been erroneously published at—"utter crap!"—$55,000 a year.

Innate modesty suggests to him, he said, that he isn't worth a penny more than the prime minister, who earns $45,000 a year. But, yes, he is getting in excess of $30,000—more than the $29,000-tops the post paid in the past—but "clearly under $40,000."

The Film Board budget, however, has been frozen at $10 million. Would he be fighting for more money? "I don't know what I'm going to be fighting for but I'm operating on a rather basic belief that if I can prove, if I can demonstrate, the value of the work of the Film Board, I'll have no trouble getting money from the government. . .From my own experience, if I do well, there'll be no denying my needs."

Newman started life as an artist in Toronto but quit and went into photography when he noticed he wasn't as good as Picasso.

Later he was equally unable to kid himself about his own films. "I personally have made some very, very good ones—but they're crap compared to some of the work kids are doing at the Film Board today." It was early recognition of this depressing fact, he explains, coupled with "the need to be best," that drove him to discover his own metier: "In Grierson's wonderful phrase, I'm a creative midwife, I'm an impressario. I like to bring things to life."

A Canadian Cecil B. De Mille as one of your colleagues has suggested? "Well, I have much more taste than Cecil B. De Mille ever had in his life and the breadth of my work is about a million miles wider than his."

In 1968, fed up with television, Sydney Newman went from the BBC to Associated British Picture Corporation to make —he thought—his first feature films. In a year he developed four scripts and on Christmas Eve, 1968, he was finally given nearly a million dollars to make a film. The next day, the giant EMI recording and tape equipment firm bought ABPC and froze his funds. EMI decided not to make feature films and later, not to make films for TV. The story isn't widely known but there's no mystery about it. He didn't flop. He could have lived for five years —"carefully"— on what EMI paid to settle his contract. He flew back to Canada at the CBC's expense to be interviewed for a top post—but en route back to England, he dropped in on old friend Pierre Juneau, now head of the CRTC, and went to work for him instead.

And yes, he is Berlitzing 90 minutes daily "because I want to call a sonofabitch that—if he is one—in his own language," but "I have lived my whole life in the creative world, I have not come across stupid biases, and I refuse to believe a Film Board person whose mother tongue is French is going to deny me my views and attitudes because I'm incompetent in his language."

Having said all this, Newman sent a few sedative words in the direction of the film-makers. He intends to make no changes immediately. This may come as a shock to the staff, who in the past several years have rarely had positive proof that management looked at their work, but Newman intends to look at films for six hours a day, every day, for about five months:"And only then will I know the capacities of the staff and only then, by relating them to their budgets, will I know what the films cost and how they relate to time tables and what they've done in time."

He says that in the extra hours a day, he'll try to find the relationship between who does what, who rules what, who's in charge of what, what distribution does, how much money the Film Board spends and earns.

"Maybe by about four months I might have a sense of whether I like the Film Board the way it is or whether I want to change it. I might like it fine."

Later, he'll "jolly well make sure I'm in Ottawa a lot—one must never run away from the seat of power." And he adds: "You see, in a crazy way this funny little town called Ottawa is. . . aware of every trend in the country. Oh, listen, if you only lived here (Ottawa) it's death; the sinews, the nerve endings are out *there* but the brain is right here. I'll be in Montreal with the film-makers four days a week and then—uggh!—I'll have to come up to Ottawa and do my stuff here."

At this juncture can one limn a future for Sydney Newman beyond the Film Board appointment? Will he one day, as many people hope, succeed to the presidency of the CBC?

One recalls his remark that "the NFB has got to remember they're a piddling little. . . No! They've got to remember it's a small organization compared to a national Canadian Broadcasting Corporation. It's small compared to a CTV. It plays a very important role, far out of proportion to its size, but it's still a small part of a big, complex industry."

But this sense of proportion about the role of the Film Board doesn't suggest at all that he regards the NFB merely as a stepping stone. It should be filed for future reference that it took Newman only a few years to change the direction of BBC drama completely. In under five years, he whipped it into such good shape that "my ideas became their ideas, and their ideas became mine, it was just self-running so I got bored and began to look around. I organized myself out of a job."

Understandably, therefore, he doesn't regard the NFB post as the last of his career. He says that all he really wants to do is "talk to a lot of people as best as I know how," and suggests only that the head of the Film Board addresses smaller audiences—although they're certain to be much larger when the creative midwife gets through with the NFB—than the head of the CBC. The CBC's potential audience is, after all, some 21 million Canadians.

MARAT/SADE DIARY

BY RICHARD PEASLEE

November 1963: Brook makes phone call to unknown American composer, Peaslee, at that time living in London. Name given Brook by mutual friend, Bill Russo. Would Peaslee like to write music for small experimental production sponsored by Royal Shakespeare Company? Peaslee reluctant to tear self away from composing concert pieces no one listens to. Hesitantly accepts job. Pay, twelve pounds a week for composer, actors, all others involved. Production called Theatre of Cruelty *(to actors and composer?).*

●

I asked our lighting man, who'd worked with Brook before, why two days before opening night drastic changes were still being made in the show. "Don't worry," he assured me, "for Peter, opening night always comes sometime in the middle of the run." The fact that the critics might have come and gone meant nothing to Brook. The show was always changing — the idea of "freezing it", so popular in the latter stages of a Broadway production was anathema to Brook.

●

Early May 1964: second experimental production with Brook and Royal Shakespeare: Genet's The Screens. *Peaslee's wife nine months pregnant, in hospital opening night. Chaos. Pay still twelve pounds a week.*

●

I didn't like Genet's writing at all, but the production was dazzling thanks to Sally Jacobs, the designer, who later worked with us on *Marat.* The nucleus of actors, broken in on the previous production were extraordinary. Anyone from acrobats and strippers to a diction coach could have learned from them. Some, like Glenda Jackson, Bob Lloyd, and Jonathan Burn, were to have leads in *Marat.*

Brook's method of working was never to come to you and say, "I want it done this way." His approach was rather: "What do you have to show me?" — then he'd go to work.

●

Late May 1964: meeting at Aldwych Theatre with Adrian Mitchell, Brook, and Royal Shakespeare manager to consider new German play with extra long title. No script, no lyrics — only rough translation. Rehearsals to begin in two weeks.

●

During the next few weeks, composing, rehearsing, eating, sleeping (?), nights, and days all blurred into one monstrous phantasmagoria called the *Marat/Sade.* Scraps of paper inscribed with lyrics passed between Mitchell and myself at any and all hours — wives gave up and left plates of food outside our studio doors. It's not so difficult to work fast, however, if you feel the basic material to be brilliant — as we both did about the Peter Weiss play. Mitchell produced an inspired adaptation in two weeks. My job was to stay one song ahead of rehearsals.

●

July 1964: Write simple folk ditty for Charlotte Corday arrival in Paris. Miss one day of rehearsal (big mistake). On return find simple folk ditty now roaring, shouting production number sung on way to guillotine.

●

July 1964: Brook not satisfied with "Marat We're Poor." Write six versions of same — still not happy. One day, "Do you remember that first version you wrote — that's just what we want."

●

July 1964: Brook: "Corday should have a sweet little song here." No song in script but O.K. — Mitchell writes lyrics that fit "Blue Danube." Peaslee half hour before rehearsal writes incredibly banal tune, for blocking purposes only. Everybody happy but Peaslee: "You can't use that version — it's a joke!" Song goes in show.

●

After *Marat* had run in London and then for a while on Broadway, strange happenings were reported in the cast. Nothing is phonier than stage madness and to avoid this each actor had chosen a form of insanity particularly familiar to him or her — often extensions of traits within themselves. The effect was, according to a psychiatrist friend of mine, extraordinarily valid, but night after night of this had some of the cast wondering whether they were not indeed the madmen they portrayed.

●

March 1966 (Martin Beck Theatre): One of musicians (who acted as inmates) missing cues. Sits catatonically in corner. Suddenly tears off wig, hurls on stage, yells: "Three cheers for Dixie!" Cast stunned — almost breaks up performance. Peaslee and Gowers (music director) later urge replacement and suggest psychiatric help. Brook refuses. Keeps actors on toes, says he. Also suspect Brook likes idea of authentic nut in cast.

●

Three things really impressed the English actors about New York: the noise, central heating, and the fact that the bars stayed open till three or four A.M. It was the latter two factors that almost finished off opening night — several actors lost their voices shortly after arriving in our city because of exterior and interior dehydration. Most acclimatized to both factors as the run progressed, however. There were occasional lapses even for this splendidly disciplined company. One nameless but leading member of the cast after playing a well-oiled first act, passed out cold during the intermission. Cold showers and coffee had

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Richard Peaslee composed the music for **Marat/Sade.** He has also composed scores for Peter Brook's production of *Oedipus,* for *The Niggerlovers,* as well as, more recently, the Broadway production of Kopit's *Indians.* Also a jazz composer, his major works include *Stonehenge, Concerto '67* (commissioned for Gerry Mulligan), and a jazz-rock "block celebration" done on the streets of New York.

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Illustration by Ingrid Schulman

no effect. An understudy was out of the question since identities could hardly be changed in midstream. So Act II was played minus a lead with some splendid improvising all around.

●

May 1966: Back to London for filming of Marat. *Pinewood Studios now the asylum of Charenton. Budget allows only three weeks for shooting. Brook nevertheless to try new film techniques.*

●

I had assumed that we would prerecord the music as in any other film with songs, the actors "miming to playback." The advantages of this technique are obvious — you can concentrate on one element at a time. The decision had been made before I arrived, however, to record everything live on the set to achieve a rough vitality rather than commercial slickness. That was the theory at least. And so valiant boom operators chased singing madmen about the set, microphones were concealed in the oddest places including one girl's bust, and our excellent sound engineer went slowly as mad as the inmates in achieving balances. The final result? At the time I was almost convinced it could work — now I see it as a minor disaster in an otherwise successful film. For future reference, prerecording is still best.

●

June 1966: Last day of filming. Champagne supper compliments Lord Birkett, our producer. Then shooting of last scene where patients go berserk. Actors go berserk— literally. Real happening. One cameraman knocked down. Brook grabs camera continues shooting. Costumes ripped to shreds, set torn up, props destroyed. Some cast party! Filming ends on schedule. No set. No costumes. No retakes.

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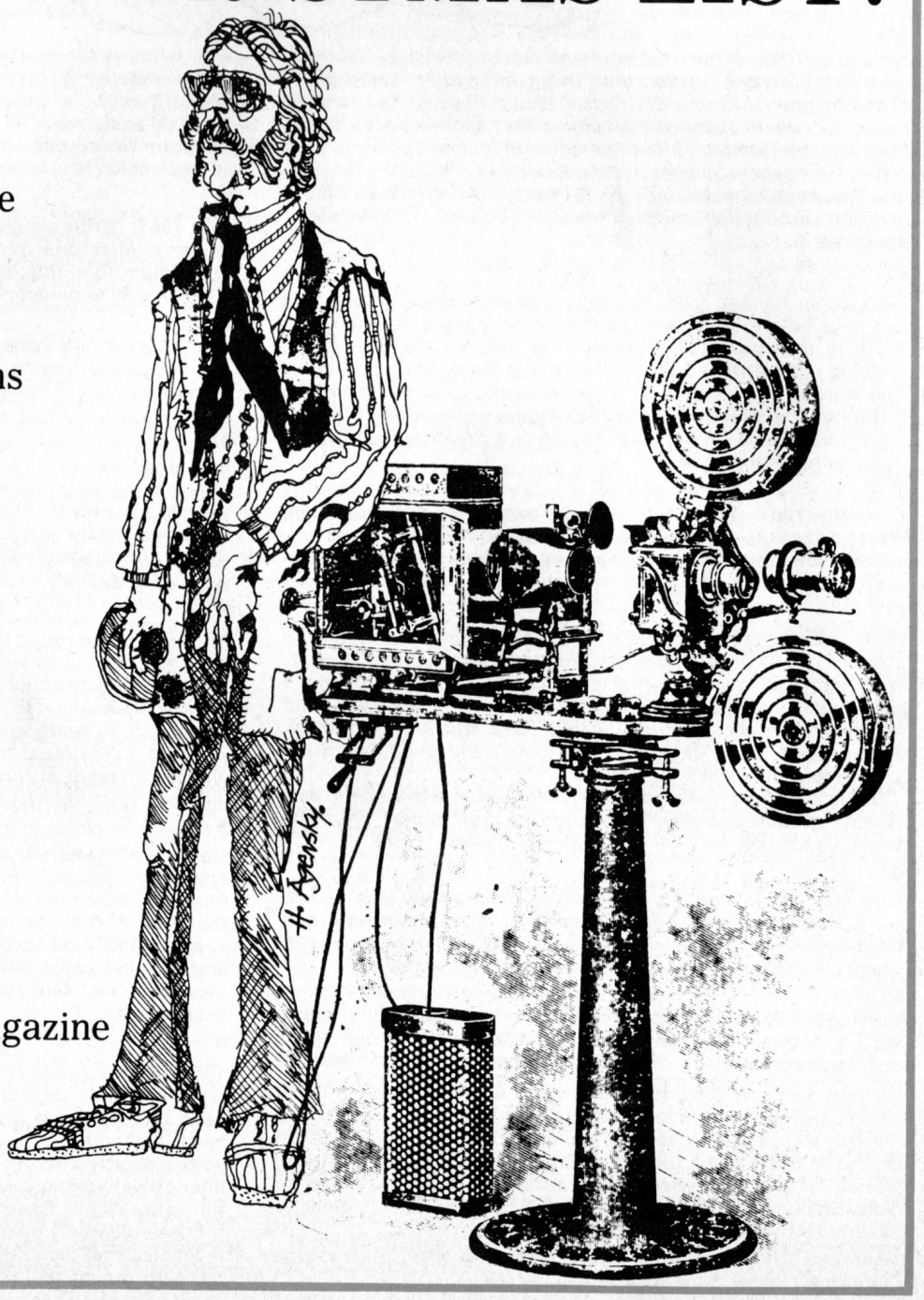

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GETTING RICHARD RUSH STRAIGHT

BY MICHAEL GOODWIN & NAOMI WISE

Among the filmmakers trying to create a "new American cinema" in Hollywood, Richard Rush, at 40, stands out as perhaps the most important. (With one reservation—Monte Hellman is still an unknown quantity. His two westerns—**Ride In the Whirlwind** and **The Shooting**—have been received with tremendous excitement in Europe, but they are still seeking American distribution, still unseen after five years.) Although Dennis Hopper's **Easy Rider** is usually given as the exemplar of the style, Hopper's success with his film is due in large measure to techniques—and a crew—borrowed directly from Rush.

Over the past five years, Rush has consistently succeeded in turning low-budget exploitation projects into highly personal cinematic statements. In **Hell's Angels On Wheels** (1967) and the **The Savage Seven**(1968), he found a means of using the limitations of the exploitation genre to advantage: while including as much action and violence as the distributors demanded, he imbued the standard motorcycle gang plots with rich substrata of archetype and myth. The cycle films were black, disturbing dramas, moral allegories in which the characters glowed with a curious, phosphorescent intensity. They were followed by **Psych-Out** (1968), a minor film about the "Love Generation", and **Getting Straight** (1970).

Getting Straight is the first of Rush's films to have a sizeable budget, major stars (Elliot Gould and Candice Bergan), and release by a major studio (Columbia). In its shallow presentation of student problems on the American campus, it is a slicker and more plastic film than any of his earlier efforts: the politically active students in **Getting Straight** appear far more foolish and naive than they are in real life. Since the intended audience for his film would seem to be the very students most likely to resent this portrayal, we questioned Rush about it.

"There are 3,500 or 4,000 campuses in the country," he said, "and although Berkeley was very sophisticated a long time ago, most of these campuses, to this day, are still virginal. As recently as two years ago, although there was a valid, irrefutable rebellion on an individual basis, and the gropings of looking for a cause, the issues had not come into focus. It's only since four students were killed at Kent State that we've had groups of kids ranging through the streets, outraged.

"I've compressed two years of development into two hours of the movie. The first political meeting is the fumbling beginning of looking for a cause. The step after that is asking to see the college president—still half play, half serious. Finally, there is the rally with some kind of size and spirit. Reaction? The police come—an incident of violent repression from the establishment. Heads are broken, and suddenly play-time becomes life and death. From that moment forward you don't see a silly student, you don't see a silly picket sign. You see an angry group of students focused on one thing: get the uniforms off campus! The issue underlying the issues is—Who owns the goddamn country?

"Portraying the students differently than I did would have been bending over backwards, in that I had elected to do a comedy that examines life-and-death social issues. By taking an individual with whom you identify intensely—Harry (Elliot Gould)—I can convey the idea, at the personal level of understanding that one can have only for a character, that there is satisfaction in the violent act of rebellion. It was the only way that I could honestly convince anybody that Harry—a man who believed that he should make it within the system—was *wrong*. Harry still believes in the American Dream, and boy is he in trouble! It's a fantastic device for taking an audience along and then flipping them over.

"The point I wanted to make was on an emotional level. The intellectual issues are not what you sell anyone on. What makes a revolutionary is passion, not organization. The sense of individual, independent outrage cannot come from a manual or a political line. And you can say whatever you want to in a film, but you can never verbalize the point you really want to make; action has to conspire to make the point. You have to see it.

"If I hadn't stacked the cards against the kids and allowed Harry to put down their points of view, I would have lost three quarters of the audience that I bought because *they* bought Harry when he put down the students. The liberals buy Harry because of what he says about the Chicago riots or Viet Nam; the conservatives buy him because he puts down the kids. The point I'm after is the *turn,* where the audience is really swinging with the characters. The point to turn is where you've stacked things dramatically to turn."

Appearances and newspaper advertising to the contrary, Rush did not really think of his film as reaching for a young, student audience. "My battleground on this film isn't with the radical left," he said, "it's with the middle-of-the-road liberal and, of course, the right. I think I have made the most potent statement that could conceivably have been made, given the structure of the heads of the people who go to see films. There were things that I felt it was absolutely necessary to say, that were more important than the specific issues: dealing with and exposing the rituals, tearing down the mask over the structure of American morality, is the most important message I can deliver. It was not a political point of view that I was examining, it was the *moral* point of view which is responsible for our politics. If we ended the Viet Nam War tomorrow, although it would be fantastic, it would not solve the morality that was capable of starting the war and continuing it. There has to be a change in the whole morality of the culture, and this was more important to me than any specific target."

Since **Getting Straight** represents, for Rush, quite a change from the conditions under which he shot his earlier films, we asked him how he felt about the three films (**Hell's Angels On Wheels, The Savage Seven, Psych-Out**) which preceded it. "I basically like those three little films very much," he answered, "in the context of what they were to me at the time I did them, which was an experimental ground for working out techniques —some visual, some story-telling, some emotional—the whole way of handling a piece of material that didn't mean anything to me to begin with. While staying within the structure of the stories, I found that I could overlay a whole set of values by playing against the written word.

"All four films are related. There is the idea of the group outside of society, rejecting its values and discovering its own. The films continued the same experiment in style—for instance, it used to be very difficult to put improvisation on film because of the need for covering shots, in which an actor has to repeat his performance. So there goes the improvisation! If you want to improvise, you have to be able to stage your scenes in terms of long, continuous passages that you don't have to cover. We worked with that in all of those films, using telephoto lenses, and ended up in the critical focus style where we start in a close-up, go into a two-shot, glimpse the room for a second, and go back into a close-up—all without editing. It's like playing three-dimensional chess. And because it's happening without a cut, you have to believe it's really happening."

Rush's cameraman on all four films was Laszlo Kovacs, who later brought his distinctive style to bear on Dennis Hopper's films. "My tendency is to make every frame only as it exists

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Michael Goodwin is film editor for *Rolling Stone* and a noted antique collector. Naomi Wise is a good friend.

in my imagination," Rush said, "so there's a very tight control of camera framing and movement—for which Laszlo is the perfect cameraman. I've taken advantage of Laszlo's abilities —I've had him hand-hold a tracking shot, intercut it with production footage, and it's so smooth you don't know it isn't a dolly."

Rush pioneered the critical focus style in **Hell's Angels On Wheels,** a film which was shot in 17 days for $185,000. "It had a wild sense of freedom in the style," he reminisced, "an almost ad-lib quality. So much of the film was the experience of taking advantage of the immediate location, the idea that occurred to you when you walked into a new location, and then working back to the idea of what the scene had to say in the film."

Rush had had no particular desire to make a film with the Hell's Angels. "My sense of identification with the Angels was not strong, it's only as they represented a form of personal rebellion to a societal structure. I was handed the following situation: 'All right, you won't have to lose your house if you do this picture. It's got real Hell's Angels in it.' I knew that everyone who had done a bike film in the past and had worked with fringe imitators of the Angels had either gotten beat up or the camera had been wrecked; they're still in hiding—that kind of thing. So I said, 'All right, I'll give you the action you want if you let me play.' The film represented a chance to experiment freely in a commercial situation, as long as I held to certain values."

We asked Rush how he felt about working with this sort of exploitation material. "You have to find a way to make a film like that meaningful to yourself," he said. "Making a film is like fighting a war; when you start shooting there's no question that you're willing to die taking that hill. Given that kind of insane commitment and drain, you really have to feel that you are doing the ultimate that you can do in that situation. Some kind of valid personal expression."

For Rush, the personal expression functions by transforming an "action" script into a moral tale, a pattern revealed as much by the earlier films as by **Getting Straight.** "What I really did on **Hell's Angels,** which had a script that wasn't much, was that Faustian overlay: the Devil in the form of Adam Roarke, Faust in the form of Jack Nicholson, the Devil's lure in the form of Sabrina Sharf, and the whole idea of offering the wonders of their world to Faust, the whole necessity to possess and control. That was a very conscious attempt to stay out of judgement, to deal only with characters and personality."

Rush's lack of value judgements imbued **Hell's Angels** with a curious sense of hopelessness, and we suggested that its characters were all beyond redemption. "The whole character of the girl, the used girl—she has been too conditioned to be redeemable," he agreed. "But there *is* a possibility for redemption in the film—Faust's redemption. Having been lured by the Devil and accepted in Hell, the one thing he did achieve was being able to walk away. In a sense, that's part of the statement in **Getting Straight.**"

Like Hitchcock, whom he greatly admires, Rush tends to lead his audience into false identification with the villains—setting them up for a later "turn". In **Hell's Angels,** it's almost impossible to avoid accepting the Angels on their own terms —as allegorical angels (or fallen angels). "We embrace our enemies inside of our expedient culture," said Rush, "as if there was a way of gaining strength from that."

Rush's next film was **The Savage Seven,** another Angels opus. This time the bikers were out on the desert, rumbling with a tribe of Indians in yet another remake of **The Seven Samurai.** As Rush filmed it, however, **Savage Seven** held evocative overtones of Sophocles and Marx within its Western framework. The Indians and the bikers discover their underlying unity, and deal with the straights/whites in a collective fashion, but inevitably, unavoidably, they are forced to do battle with each other by the gigantic fat landlord (a villain in the Greenstreet/Welles tradition) who owns the Indians' town. The film has a stark quality of pre-ordained tragedy to it that is almost Shakespearian.

"We had to find that level of allegory to put on what was basically an action story—designed in an exploitation vein to get the Hell's Angels into a new location," said Rush. "The Indians and the Angels are all outcasts from society, and they have things in common—ego, identity, rebellion. So we let them recognize it in each other, and then bring in the allegorical madnesses that create friction. We played that game, but dressed it in the classic Western shots."

Rush is one of the few American directors who deliberately include "reference" shots—shots that refer back to other movies. "There were shots taken directly from John Sturges' film (**The Magnificent Seven**) and from Kurosawa's **Seven Samurai.** Any time I could deal with Western clichés, like the

Rush (far left) directing The Savage Seven

Indians lined up endlessly on the horizon (which was a great shot to begin with, but became a cliché, just because it *was* so good), I tried to duplicate that with bikes."

Rush is not entirely satisfied with **The Savage Seven:** "I passed out in the cutting room (I had the flu) at two in the morning when we were cutting the last reel, and they wouldn't let me back in the next morning. So I never cut the last half reel of the picture. As you know from my films, the statement has to come out in a visual way in the ending, and it just isn't there on **Savage Seven.**

"But despite the fact that the ending is always a little unsettling to me (because I didn't cut it), it's basically a satisfying film. There's something about the ambitiousness of that 20-minute war at the end, where the bikes rarely touch the ground—turning it into a kind of aerial ballet. The action has to have meaning, since you're telling so much of your story through action. Chuck Baille, the stunt gaffer for **Savage Seven**, got very involved in the visuals and the acting, and there was a lot of communication going on between us. Chuck taught me a lot about the effectiveness of the stunt itself, and I taught him about the effectiveness of various visual approaches to *filming* a stunt. A good stunt man who starts to think in terms of visual and dramatic values becomes a very creative element."

Troubles with American International Pictures (AIP) in regard to editing occurred once more on **Psych-Out.** Since Rush was not allowed to cut the film, all the footage portraying the happier aspects of the Haight-Ashbury scene was shit-canned by the studio, distorting the point Rush wanted to make. It might have been the best of his films, he felt, but the release version bore little resemblance to the film he had conceived.

How did he find it possible to make films for AIP, then? "Because exploitation films had a large commercial market, and because the dramatic lever wasn't as important to them as the action ingredients, AIP could fulfill their commercial commitment by exercising a lot less story and artistic control than many studios. My three films were all made independently, and released through AIP, so they started exercising their control only after the film was shot, while I was in the editing stage."

We noted that AIP has a clearly recognizable style of its own, although other studios make films in the same genres. "What AIP films have in common," Rush said, "are those action ingredients which are the exploitable things to AIP. As soon as you start working within these ingredients, the film takes on that complexion and you can recognize the trademark. You take a story and dress it in extremes: there's a kind of infantile image-glamor that gives a film an enormous appeal without diminishing the artistic level. Certain extremes, then, are the trademark of the AIP school of film making—extremes reaching into that pocket in every little boy's heart that makes him love Batman. In **Blow-up,** Antonioni uses exactly the same structure he used in his previous films—wandering aimlessly for most of the picture, and then doing a three-act structure in the last ten minutes—but his characters had that infantile flashiness. It suddenly appealed at a primitive, as well as an intellectual, level, and this was the first film of his that was a commercial success."

If working independently in association with AIP had its drawbacks, working for them directly was even worse: "I did one picture for AIP," groaned Rush, "after which I'd rather drive a bus than work for them again. **Thunder Alley**, with Fabian and Annette Funicello. It should have been called **Process 500,** a sequel to **Fireball 500**. They thought they were saving money by doing eight-tenths of the picture in front of a back-projection screen. I could have done the film for half the cost and with three times the production values if the preoccupation with masterminding production that non-filmmakers have hadn't locked them into that kind of madness."

Despite his unfortunate experiences with the studio, Rush has faith in cinema in general. "With what's happened in films in the last couple of years—the development of a very hip audience that is taking film as its own medium, their form of communication—it's turned commercial film almost into an art form. It's getting there. I don't think a filmmaker can say, 'Gee, what would amuse them, what would they like to see?' The only way you can approach a film now, with any validity, is to say, 'What would I like to say? What do I *have* to say?' "

FILMOGRAPHY OF RICHARD RUSH: **Too Soon To Live** (1960); **Of Love And Desire** (1963); **A Man Called Dagger** (1964); **Thunder Alley** (1965); **The Fickle Finger of Fate** (1966); **Hell's Angels On Wheels** (1967); **The Savage Seven** (1968); **Psych-Out** (1968); **Getting Straight** (1970).

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script by EDMUND WARD from the novel "Ask Agamemnon" by JENNI HALL executive producer JOSEF SHAFTEL
produced by PETER SNELL directed by ALAN GIBSON COLOR FROM CINERAMA RELEASING

something for everyone

1970. Colour. Director: Harold Prince. Cast: Angela Lansbury, Michael York, Jane Carr. A National General Pictures Release.

Dwight MacDonald once reported that after seeing **The Sound Of Music** he experienced a feeling of goodwill to all humanity that lasted for approximately ten minutes. In an unstoned condition that seems the appropriate timespan for goodwill these days. The **Woodstock** kids —determined to prove a point—managed to string it out for three days, but would have been hardpressed to make it last much longer than that. **Woodstock** one might term a goodwill *marathon* proving as much about human nature as its ability to sit on a flagpole for the same number of hours.

Something For Everyone has no illusions about human nature, but it nevertheless manages to sustain a genial attitude toward corruption which makes everyone's private cross a little easier to bear. It is doubtful that D. H. Lawrence would find it amusing (Lawrence would treat the same themes tragically and it would come out **Nothing For Anybody**) but then Lawrence—hopefully—was the last of the red-hot puritans and recent film versions of his work (**Women In Love, The Virgin And the Gypsy**) need, in addition to an appreciation which is their due, to be supplemented with satire. For anyone who likes to laugh, and who drew a blank with Mike Nichol's **Catch-22,** and found Robert Altman's **M*A*S*H** only fitfully funny, **Something For Everyone** can be recommended as a tonic entertainment.

Practically every filmmaker's vision of humanity nowadays is a dark one—be it through Lawrence's pessimism, Nabokov's cynicism, and everybody's nihilism on the level of Terry Southern and Joseph Heller—but what distinguishes Harold Prince's first film **Something For Everyone** is its charming belief that an audience should be seduced instead of raped into accepting the thrusts of blackhearted wit. Michael York portrays a mysterious stranger who alters the lives of an entire household through his sexual opportunism. There are superficial resemblances to Joe Orton's **Mr. Sloane** (York's character is conscienceless, shamelessly seeking the leverage of blackmail in every situation, and his path is strewn with murders) but whereas Sloane is ruthlessly dedicated to nothing larger than himself, Michael York portrays a youth who harnesses his psychopathic nature to a social cause. As it happens, he wishes to restore a German aristocratic family (headed by Angela Lansbury) to their pre-war eminence, rebuild their fortunes and reopen their estate (which he achieves through an amusing inversion of having aristocrats exploit the nouveau riche), but his single-minded ambition and diligent amorality could be applied with equal success to any aspect of Germany's miraculous, post-war industrial development. It's difficult to keep a bad man down. Though the script rarely yields an epigram, it is suffused with an effervescent wit, and Angela Lansbury wears her lines as lightly as a feather boa, flapping in the wind. Jane Carr's accent is wrong (unless, as appears, she did her schooling at St. Trinians) but she enters the spirit of the film with such relish that the wrong accent is hardly a serious irritant. Even Michael York (speaking as someone who mentally drummed his fingers during York's appearances in Losey's **Accident**, and Zefferelli's **Romeo and Juliet** and found him creditable only in David Greene's **The Strange Affair**) contributes a good performance in a role that requires him to fill a moral vacuum with cunning, and convey the difficult impression that he has a computer for a mind. **Something For Everyone** is arguably a greater film than most critics have granted; if any film has the power to increase the sophistication of the general public it is this salutary spoof of our taboos, which succeeds in making most other films and television programs bordering on its themes jejune melodramas.

John Hofsess

John Hofsess, a *Take One* Contributing Editor, is currently working on two shows for ETV—one on filmmakers, the other on violence in Canadian history.

domicile conjugale

Produced by Les Films du Carrosse-Valoria Films (Paris) and Fida Cinematografica (Rome). 1970. Eastmancolor. 95 min. Director: François Truffaut. Screenplay: François Truffaut, Bernard Revon, Claude de Givray. Music: Antoine Duhamel. Photography: Nestor Almendros. Editor: Agnès Guillemot. Cast: Jean-Pierre Léaud, Claude Jade, Mademoiselle Hiroko, Barbara Laage, Daniel Boulanger.

When the raincoated stranger declared his love to Christine, Antoine Doinel's girl, in the closing moments of **Stolen Kisses,** it seemed to be Truffaut's way of telling us that the Antoine-Christine affair was heading for the rocks. After all, they weren't exactly the perfect match: Antoine, unconventional and ultra-romantic, Christine, well-bred and practical. And didn't the film's very theme song signal the transience of their relationship: *Que reste-t-il de nos amours?*

Well, no. Here they are again in **Domicile Conjugal,** married. They become parents, separate when Antoine starts an affair with a Japanese girl, then come back together again after the affair breaks up. A brief, farcical epilogue shows us Antoine firmly in control of a doting Christine. It is the last we shall see of them. "Happy couples," says Truffaut, "have no story."

Maybe, but he might have told us how the appealing young lovers of **Stolen Kisses** were transformed so rapidly into the Dagwood and Blondie of **Domicile Conjugal.** It is as though Truffaut, who has announced he intends to stop making movies for a while, had already tired of his screen alter ago, Antoine, when he finished **Stolen Kisses,** but could not resist trying to cash in with a sequel on that film's box-office popularity. Truffaut's direction in **Domicile Conjugal** seems half-hearted: he allows Jean-Pierre Léaud to indulge his mannerisms to the point of setting one's teeth on edge. As for Claude Jade, she again gives the impression of a very nice girl who has somehow strayed onto a movie set.

Then there is the matter of tone. Truffaut has in the past been as adept at merchandising Gallic charm as those old-school directors he used to snipe at as a critic, but in **Domicile Conjugal** the charm has degenerated into a cuteness that extends even to the credits, where the Japanese girl, Kyoko, is billed as Mademoiselle Hiroko. Less winning still is Truffaut's funny-ha-ha treatment of the breakup of the Antoine-Kyoko affair. We are shown Antoine desperately trying to entertain Kyoko, like a male geisha, getting leg cramps from extended squatting on the floor, and gagging over the dishes she offers him, so different from such culinary delights as *steak-pommes frites.* In the film's penultimate scene, he takes her to a restaurant for dinner and keeps deserting her to phone Christine. Kyoko finally gets the message and leaves one for Antoine, the Japanese equivalent of "Screw you, Jack." The whole episode reeks of French chauvinism at its most vulgar. What with this film and its immediate predecessor, **The Wild Child,** Truffaut's self-imposed absence from the screen won't be too hard to bear.

Geoffrey Minish

enter--taining mr. sloane

A Canterbury Film Production, 1970. Colour, 94 min. Director: Douglas Hickox. Script: Clive Exton, based on a play by Joe Orton. Cast: Beryl Reid, Harry Andrews, Peter McEnery, Alan Webb. Released in Canada through International Film Distributors.

The day I saw **Performance** there were ten people in a theatre with a capacity of over 1,000: who says the general public doesn't have taste? It's a coy, insufferably silly film which even James Fox's valiant efforts as an actor can't salvage. A film can be many things—obscene, repugnant, vicious, boring; it can go completely against the grain of a viewer and still deserve to be called "a great film" providing it contains the undeniable force of truth framed and phrased in an original way. **Performance** has the air of a dreary, sophomoric revue in which the writers and actors think they are daring because the Dean of Women raises an eyebrow and frowns: the air of decadence which the film exudes is as phoney and sprayed-on a scent as anything that comes in aerosol cans. Whereas **Performance** has a puritanical notion that the epitome of "evil" is Mick Jagger in drag, painted lips pouting like Bardot (the effect is more like Jerry Lewis trying to play the Marquis de Sade, and the pro-

per response somewhere between a groan and a giggle), the film version of Joe Orton's **Entertaining Mr. Sloane** has a deeper and more chilling knowledge of evil.

There is no poison to sting one in **Performance**'s plastic flowers-of-evil, but entering the world of Joe Orton is like being lured into a venus fly-trap. The ferocious energy of Orton's art is based on homosexual self-hatred; he is probably the most misanthropic artist in English letters since Jonathan Swift. There is no form of human relationship that he doesn't treat with withering scorn and what rivets one's attention to his work (**Look What The Butler Saw,** among others) is the acute intelligence of his hatred. In Orton's view, man is superior to all other forms of animal life only because he is more beastly.

Sloane (Peter McEnery) is a psychopathic youth who mercenarily grants his favours to Kath (Beryl Reid) and her brother Ed (Harry Andrews), while they grovel at his feet. They are *desperately* fond of him, and in exchange for money and their dotage, he provides each with the illusion that he cares for them—only to relish the moments when he can humiliate them, and demonstrate what a degrading power he has over them. When Sloane has exhausted all the potential opportunities of a situation, he likes to move on and forget about it; he's touchy about the past because he's never done anything he would care to remember. Though by the end of the film he has twice committed murder, he still wakes up each morning a wide-eyed innocent capable of rationalizing any act, and looking quite harmless and blameless. Orton has many targets but his primary one is the moral paralysis of people tyrannized by sex; even when Sloane has murdered Kemp (Alan Webb), Kath and Ed's father, they find it "in their hearts" possible to forgive him, in order to preserve their relationship with him a few more months or years. Sloane knows nothing of affection, forgiveness, or forbearance, and regards his lovers as fools; even when locked in an embrace his murderous impulses are close to the surface. He frequently lies about his feelings, and his nightly outings with the birds; he is hurt and outraged if his lies aren't believed, but he is contemptuous when they are. If he were Kath and Ed's son, he'd probably be kicked out of the house as their ingrate progeny, but because they are drawn to him sexually, they are willing to find excuses for him. "Do you like me?" asks Beryl Reid, "do you? just a little? say it. Please say it." "Even if you don't mean it, please say it," she persists, on the verge of tears. And while she is in the throes of ecstatic intercourse, Mr. Sloane who is pumping away mechanically finally manages to mutter, "Oh Christ."

When Ed first learns of his sister's houseguest, he storms into Sloane's room to notify him he'll have to leave. The room is dark, and he can't see Sloane, he delivers his message curtly and with indignation. But when he raises the blind and sees Sloane lounging nearly-nude on the bed, he stops short; there then begins a psychological somersault using very few words but long and telling pauses in which Sloane establishes himself as master of the house. Though ostensibly discussing sports ("Yes," says Sloane, "I do a little pole-vaulting now and then.. swimming...yes... I do like to take a plunge...") they are in fact telegraphing a quite different message in between puns. Though director Douglas Hickox and screenplay writer Clive Exton have taken considerable liberties with the original play, and end the film in a mock double-wedding ceremony in which Sloane marries his two paramours, Orton's menacing suggestion that he will eventually kill one or both of them is still retained.

When first performed in 1964, **Entertaining Mr. Sloane** could be viewed as a malevolent comedy peppered with black wit, but since Joe Orton's murder in 1967, its meaning has been altered to grim prophecy. The shadow of Orton's death hovers over the play like Edgar Allan Poe's omnipresent raven, and as Poe wrote, "from out that shadow (his) soul shall be lifted —nevermore."

John Hofsess

venice film festival

The first film we saw at the Venice Film Festival was Jean-Gabriel (**La Fille aux Yeux d'Or**) Albicocco's **Le Coeur Fou,** about a journalist who falls in love with a pyromaniac in a mental hospital. She escapes while the hospital is burning and they go off together, until she is tricked into returning and he shoots himself.

It has a few pretensions to grander ideas than that synopsis indicates. There's the by-now-regulation reflections about the relationship of journalist and interviewee, photographer and subject, and by extension, filmmaker and actors and audience. Serge meets Clo when he goes to interview his ex-wife, a famous actress entering the mental hospital, and of course the other journalists interview him, and the photographers rip off his life, just as he does his ex-wife's.

Well, it was a bit more pretentious than that, too. Most of the film was shot with a fish-eye lens (particularly noticeable as the shot changed, each time greeted by loud groans from the critics), and this created a metaphor for the movie: the world was all distorted, and their love couldn't survive in it. Ho hum: they even holed up on an island just like **Weekend**'s kids in the woods. But that's ok; a lot of people I know are doing that nowadays. And the lens was used consistently, to create a certain vision of the world—no more or less gimmicky (as the critics complained) than any other technique.

On the other hand, many of the journalists loved **Kesakapina**, a Finnish film by Jaakko Pakkasvirta. The festival synopsis reads: "The denouncement...of psychological, moral, and social situations determined by materialism...develops into the crisis of which Susan (an advertising model) becomes the victim, and into the frame of the demands of an increasingly radical revolt capable of overthrowing the system and destroying its repressive and violent structures." Sounds terrific, doesn't it? Just what we want to see. I guess that's what most of the critics reacted to, because the film itself just isn't that. A film directed against capitalism and the consumer society, it is one of the most commercial, consumer-oriented movies I've seen outside of Hollywood. It's got rock and roll (in English too, presumably so Amerikans can understand as the Finns protest against cultural imperialism), nude swimming, sex, beautiful people, fast cars, **Blow-Up** scenes of photographers and models, billboards and TV commercials, slow-motion death scenes, gun-glinting-through - leaves - shots — everything that seems to make a film sell these days. In the press conference later, Pakkasvirta said that he made the film principally to educate workers and country people, but I thought that rather than encourage them to overthrow the system, the movie would make them want to move to the city and become models — neuroses and even thoughts of suicide can look pretty glamorous in 35mm. The direct statements of revolutionary doctrine, which did manage to build up a fine impetus towards the end, unfortunately weren't enough to counteract the message of the medium.

This technique of direct statement of doctrine did work very well in a Finnish documentary, **Solidaarismus** by Lasse Naukkarinen, adding revolutionary advice to the awakening of political consciousness in students, and their subsequent and promising attempts to achieve solidarity with workers. Interest in the revolution and the problems of the Third World ran high at the festival, with a conference and screenings of films from Egypt, Lebanon, Morocco and Algeria, the feature films of Jean Rouch (**Petit à Petit**) and Glauber Rocha (**Der Leone Have Sept Cabecas**), both dealing with problems of imperialism in Africa, and an exuberant couple from Denmark who are writing a book on the subject.

No such revolutionary fervour penetrated a documentary on heroin addiction, a problem of the cultural revolution. **Scag**, made by Lawrence Salzmann and Art Ciocco for American TV, has the audacity to document in detail all the steps involved in the production and distribution of heroin, from the 40-acre field of poppies to the pusher on the street, and then to bow out gracefully when it comes to direct blame. As Dick Gregory said in Toronto this summer, how is it that the cops, try as they will, can never find a pusher, when an eleven-year-old kid can, maybe only a few hours before he dies? The question is larger than that, of course. The film demonstrates that the heroin business is efficiently run by a very large organization—but it's still potentially a dangerous business, so you have to have good connections before you can be in the narcotics end of the Mafia. **Scag** doesn't mention that. However it does manage to say all the liberal things that stir our hearts—it even finds reformed

Kay Armatage, a Toronto teacher and critic, is a frequent contributor to *Take One*.

17-year-olds or still hooked 14-year-olds to say that they tried heroin because they didn't have enough love. Let's get back to the fifties and the anguishing question of whether a mother should work or be at home to greet her teenager when he returns from school. Deprived of a cookie and an understanding smile, he may turn to heroin instead.

There was an American documentary that was good, however: **Lord Thing**, by Dewitt Beall. This is a chronicle of the Lords of Chicago, from their beginnings as street gangs to their realization that their hatred should be directed not at each other, but outward to the white community which is the real source of their frustration. The gangs amalgamate and start their programmes of rehabilitation of each other and the black ghetto, and the film ends with voices from jail, as repression sets in. The next best thing to being made by the blacks themselves, **Lord Thing** is narrated by leaders of the Lords, and uses their members to recreate historical events. Although the recreations make no attempt to match the 'actors' with the narrators, they are intensely immediate and realistic. Richard Daley appears as himself.

Another black film was Jean (*cinema-verité)* Rouch's **Petit à Petit,** improvised in Paris and Niger by Damoure Zika and Lam Ibrahima Dia. Edited from eight hours of usable film with no scene re-shot, it comes in two versions, 120 minutes and 4½ hours. Damoure and Lam come to Paris to do an anthropological study of the culture, which they finally reject as unsuitable for introduction into Africa. The movie is warm, witty, perceptive, ironic, and firmly revolutionary. So is its director.

There were more movies than these at Venice this summer, but, a month and a half later, these are the ones I find memorable.

Kay Armatage

OVER- & -looked UNDER- -RATED

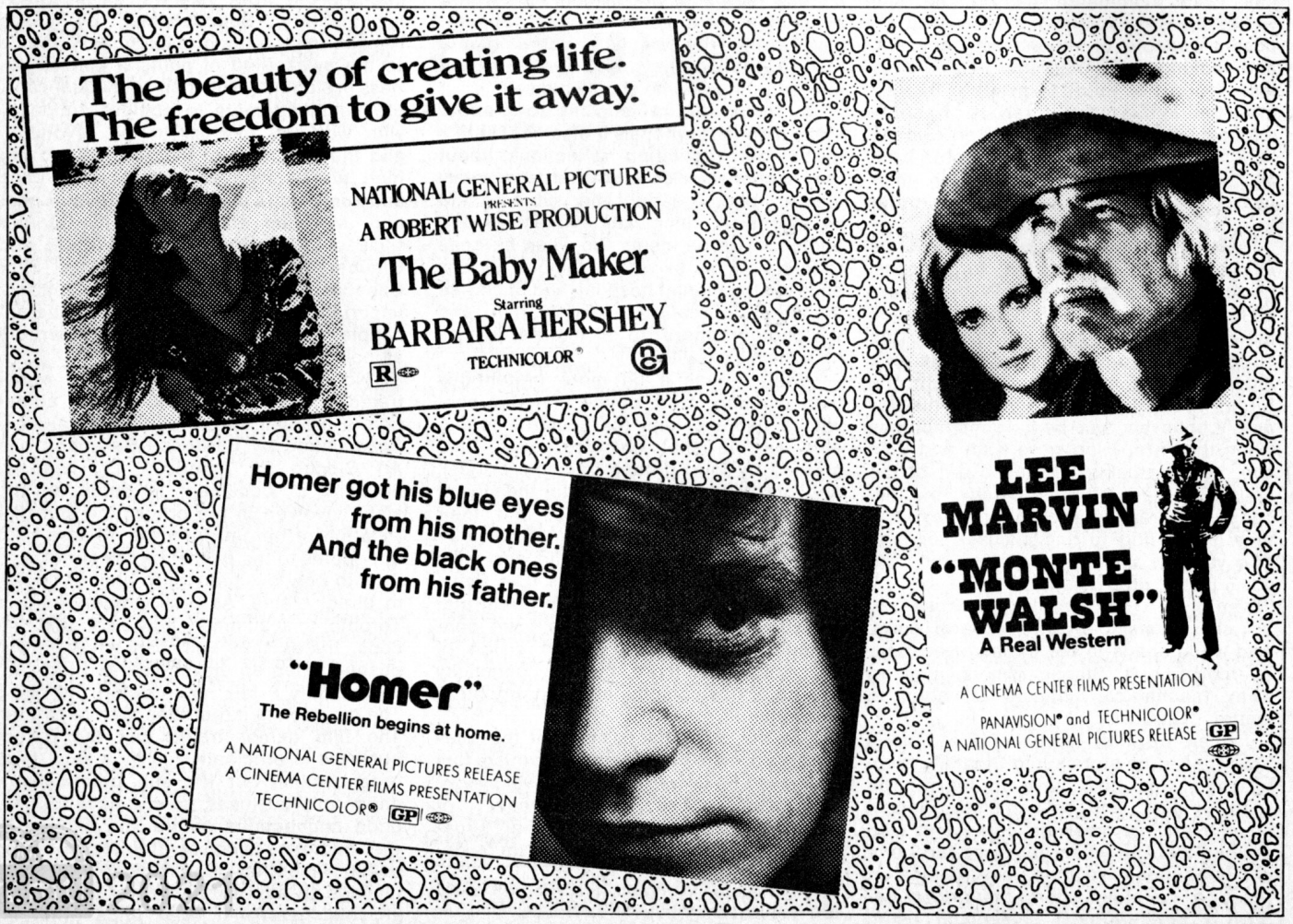
The purpose of this column is to recommend films which are of more interest than their critical reception would indicate. Suggestions from *Take One* contributors and readers are welcomed.

La Marseillaise. Dir. Jean Renoir. I recently managed to see the almost complete "reconstituted" version of Renoir's masterpiece on the French Revolution. What is there to say about Renoir's neglect in North America? It seems trivial to write about other films being overlooked when **Une Partie de Campagne, La Grande Illusion, La Marseillaise, La Regle du Jeu** and **The Golden Coach**—films which have given me more pleasure than almost any others I can think of—are so rarely seen on this continent.

Cover Me Babe. Dir. Noel Black. You'd think Fox would have learned their lesson with **Pretty Poison,** but they've snuck out **Cover Me Babe,** Noel Black's second feature film even more quietly than they did his first. (I saw it on a double bill with **Beyond the Valley of the Dolls.**) Despite a lot of bad spots, **Cover Me Babe** is a really interesting movie about—amongst other things—the movies we live, or at least want to live. Watch for the quote from Samuel Goldwyn Jr.'s **The Young Lovers:** apparently some of us want to live some pretty bad movies.

Joe Medjuck

Dionysus in '69. Dir. Richard Schechner's brilliant and audacious interpretation of Euripides' *The Bacchae,* as originally played in New York by The Performance Group, seems strangely remote in this monochromatic, split-screen "recording" of a live performance, but William Finley as Dionysus, William Shepherd as Pentheus, and Patrick McDermott (familiar as the ill-fated pusher in **Joe**) as Tiresias, give their roles such definition that the film takes on the value of a historical document. What the film loses in stage presence and immediacy (and with any play so dependent upon tactility as **Dionysus In '69** the falloff is sharp) it gains by preserving the most lucid version of



the play that has yet been performed.

John Hofsess

Zig-Zag. Dir. Richard A. Colla. Originally entitled **False Witness,** but the quickly-sinking MGM studios changed the title and rushed it into release with practically no press coverage. Colla betrays his television origins (on numerous series for Universal Studios) with unnecessary flashiness but he keeps his story tight and continually interesting. George Kennedy, Anne Jackson, and Eli Wallach perform with more than competence. If Phil Karlson is over the hill perhaps we have a new actioneer in Colla.

Howard Curle

success story

Readers of the last issue of *Take One*, who will remember Peter Bryant's rather touching diary of the trials and tribulations involved in making a film among the native people of Bella Coola, British Columbia, may be interested in this follow-up, in the words of Bryant himself:

"In connection with my film experience in Bella Coola, the film is now entitled **Noohalk**, and it has just won first prize for the Student (English Language) Film in the Famous Players Canadian student film competition. The film will be blown up to 35mm and shown in Famous Players theatres. [Ed. note: Famous owns and operates some 340 theatres across Canada.]

"One last word on the problems of the film. Print costs were met, and aid to distribution given, through a grant from the Koerner Foundation.

"As for me: Well, I am now one of the Fellows at the Center for Advanced Film Studies of the American Film Institute, Beverly Hills. I am working on a short film project and writing a feature film script that I hope to direct in the future. I am the only Canadian here, and **Noohalk**—along with my previous film, **Felix**—were what got me into this very fine place."

You see, Virginia, there really *is* a Santa Claus.

little fauss & big halsy

It seems that my first review of this film in the last issue of *Take One* was a case of premature evaluation. I saw the film at a sneak preview, was told on bad authority that it was to be released soon thereafter, and went on—innocently—to violate a cardinal rule of criticism: to review a film before its World Premiere. In the interim, **Little Fauss and Big Halsy** was thoroughly re-edited, radically enough so that I have the distinct privilege of having reviewed a film that doesn't exist. But there is an irony: I have always suspected that auteur theorists could review films, and often do, without actually having seen them, simply on the basis of their acquaintance with the director's previous efforts. Now that I reread my review, I find that it still pretty much applies. Some of the trouble spots have been mitigated—Johnny Cash's presence on the sound track has been notably reduced; the film is generally easier to relax with and now qualifies as reasonably gratifying entertainment. Other problems still remain—the story is somewhat spineless, Furie's direction is less than dazzling and one still gets little feeling for the sport of cycling. It would be interesting to see the outcome of a film like this in the hands of a director like Frankenheimer. As it stands, Furie showed more feeling for the rootlessness and aimless release of cycling, and the complex relationship between male cyclists in **The Leather Boys** (something of a Continental microcosm for this film). In the first version of **LF&BH** that I saw, the emphasis seemed equally divided between the title characters. In the new and current version, Halsy (Redford) seems the central focus and this is an improvement because Michael Pollard's mugging becomes more tiresome with every film—and especially so in two viewings of this one. So much for take two. I might add that the film still ends in a freeze frame, combined with a slow zoom, only it is on Halsy instead of Fauss, as in the first. Which leads me to believe that some of the problems with this film rest in the scripting, which is alternately tart and self-consciously inconsistent. For the rest, I refer you to *Take One,* Volume 2, No. 7.

Susan Rice

REFLEC-TIONS ON THE CURRENT SCENE

by HERMAN G. WEINBERG

HOLLYWOOD CAMERAMEN: Sources of Light, by Charles Higham. 176 pp., Ill., Indexed. Indiana University Press, 1970. $2.25.

To listen to the cameramen tell it, the ultimate character of a film was invariably determined by the way they photographed it and the innovations and special effects they brought to it. This, to a certain extent, is true, only it omits the crucial role of the director, especially the sensitive director, who just as invariably was the one who gave the film its ultimate character and, just as invariably, its ultimate distinction. I speak, for instance, of men like Stroheim, Murnau and Sternberg, whose contributions to this phase of film making, especially the last two, was, to put it mildly, considerable, and yet are strangely missing from the book's foreword in this respect. Certainly, if any directors were responsible for the physical appearance of their films (i.e., the lighting and photography, innovations and effects, composition, settings, etc., in short the works) it was Murnau and Sternberg—and yet Karl Struss and Lee Garmes give little indication of the vital roles their directors played in **Sunrise** and the several films Garmes photographed for Sternberg. It's that way, generally, with William Daniels, too, in connection with his work for Stroheim (from **Blind Husbands** right on through **Greed**) and some others to a lesser degree. But getting this out of the way—and it is certainly not meant to keep you from reading this book—the rest is fascinating stuff, chockful of anecdotes, and sometimes even exploding into revelations like Daniels' incredible statement that Stroheim's first cut of **Foolish Wives** was 125 reels which he intended to have shown in three nights (of 40 reels each?).

Seven Hollywood cameramen—Leon Shamroy, Lee Garmes, William Daniels, James Wong Howe, Stanley Cortez, Karl Struss and Arthur Miller — seven of the most prestigious names among Hollywood cameramen—had their remarks tape-recorded and transcribed by Mr. Higham and here, verbatim, are their ramblings, and reminiscences, informal, very personal—the verbal equivalents of candid camera portraits. If no man is a hero to his valet, no director is, *ipso facto,* a hero to his cameraman, unless, in the cameraman's opinion, he has earned it. Perhaps that's as it should be, for the cameraman's craft is a very vital one and there are artist cameramen just as certainly as there are artist directors. So when some of our biggest name directors are declared by the cameramen who worked for them to have had feet of clay, well, I suppose that's how it was. It all makes very interesting reading, indeed, and I only regret the omission from this roundup of the voice of Rollie Totheroh,

Herman G. Weinberg has contributed articles to most of the world's leading film journals, served on the juries of various film festivals, been US correspondent for *Sight & Sound* as well as *Cahiers du Cinéma,* and published several books on the cinema.

ubiquitous cameraman for Chaplin from the beginning almost to the very end. My, what revelations he might have had about the way Chaplin worked! And the amount of footage that was shot to get those amazingly tight little two reelers, so perfect, so exquisite. . . There are checklists at the end giving the filmography of the cameramen, and an Index. The book is also nicely and aptly illustrated.

What the cameramen had to say is also a part of film history, let not the would-be historians forget it. After all, it's one thing for a director to ask for certain effects and it's another thing to have a cameraman able to give it to him. Thus they work hand in glove, as the saying goes—but let it be noted, also, that it is the hand (the director) that moves the glove (the cameraman), no, *mes enfants?*

Withal, I heartily commend it to your attention.

In conclusion I would just like to add a note about the recent Truffaut film, **L'Enfant Sauvage,** in which I was disappointed, but only because I expect so much from the director of the excruciatingly right **400 Blows.** I kept thinking throughout the unreeling of **L'Enfant Sauvage** of another film from France on a similar theme that everyone seems to have forgotten, for no one has mentioned it—**La Symphonie Pastorale,** with Michele Morgan, from a story by André Gide. I think the director was Delannoy. That's why I put together my recent book, *Saint Cinema,* to keep green the memory of some films and filmmakers that might otherwise be equally forgotten. The history of the cinema must not just be a succession of new films—the past must continually be consolidated.

MEDIATIONS

JEFF SCHRANK

This new column is a direct result of the thousands of *Take One* readers who wrote to say there are not enough regular columns in *Take One.* Really, it's an attempt to provide film people with news from the other media plus some items from the film world. What sort of news? Well like. . .

Instant Movie Film. . . . In case you haven't heard yet, Polaroid Corporation announced and demonstrated **instant color movie film.** Polaroid claimed to have a market target date for the new instant film but aren't making it public yet. The camera and projector can be ordinary ones. What's special is the film and a processing box. No prices have been announced. Kodak heard about the new development and commented, "darned interesting".

Prediction on **EVR**. . . CBS has a truly imaginative and important new invention on their hands. Their promotional literature so far seems limited in vision. The Japanese should be able to take over this market within two years. They already have worked out standardization and will offer EVR at lower cost and with the ability to record off TV sets.

Beyond the Valley of EVR. . . . . The Germans have an invention which might make EVR look obsolete. The new development, called **video records,** consists of a thin flexible foil that can be played on a special record player to produce both video and audio when hooked to a TV set. The new record will have only one side, run for five minutes and cost less than the current price for an LP. The playback equipment shouldn't cost more than $250 when ready in 1972. The video record turns at a speed of 1500 rpm.

From those friendly folks who brought you cancer. . . . **Cigarette ads** will be banned from U.S. broadcasting as of January 1. Some tobacco companies have approached major film studios offering to pay for shots of the stars puffing away. They also offered $15,000 for each film that worked in billboard shots featuring their product. Another report has the cigarette companies increasing the amount of nicotine content, hoping that the higher doses would "addict" smokers to keep them puffing after the ads stop; like a smoker should.

AM stereo is here. . . it is, at least, if you live within one hundred miles of Tiajuana. Kahn Research Laboratories of Freeport, N.Y. developed the **AM stereo** system. The technique involves sending two signals by one station using two sidebands. To receive the stereo AM the listener needs only two ordinary AM radios. He places them far enough apart to attain stereo separation and then tunes the right radio of center to the right and the left radio of center to the left. XTRA in Tiajuana has been using the system since May. No U.S. station is yet equipped or licensed for such operation.

Cutting up. . . . Grove Press Films is finding scissor-happy projectionists snipping out parts of its **I Am Curious Yellow** 35mm prints. Grove's distribution head explained "they liked the interviews."

My Lai film. . . . Joseph Strick *(Ulysses, Tropic of Cancer)* is working on a feature film consisting entirely of interviews with some of the 70 U.S. soldiers who participated in the **My Lai massacre.** Financing has come out of his own pocket. He says, "These men are not monsters, and I don't want to paint them as such. But what happened there was monstrous, and I want to find out all I can about how and why it happened." Distribution will have to wait until court martials have ended.

Testing McLuhan. . . . At the University of Pennsylvania's school of communication Stephen Shaffer and J.R. Rossiter attempted to **test McLuhan's dictum** that film is a hot (arouses but doesn't invite participation) medium and TV a cool (nonarousing but involving) one. The results, if the amount of pupil dilation can be a determining factor, showed that the opposite seemed true. Are there others trying to experimentally prove or disprove McLuhan?

Beckett-scripted short available. . . . Pyramid Films (Box 1048, Santa Monica, Ca. 90406) has what used to be the Janus New Cinema collection of short films. Pyramid rents the films individually for $10-25 each. *Act Without Words* is an **animation effort scripted by Samuel Beckett** and directed by Guido Bettiol. A puppet man is alone in the existential universe (represented by a desert) and struggles to survive his trap. The 10 minute film rents for $15.

Do-it-yourself education. . . . **Transcripts of 180 courses** taught at the Berkeley campus of the University of California are available at $2.95 (plus 20c shipping) each from Fybate Lecture Notes, 2440 Bancroft Way, Berkeley, Ca. 94704. A complete listing is available free by mail.

How to win Oscars by breaking rules. . . . **Conrad Hall** won the Oscar last year for the best cinematography in *Butch Cassidy.* The following quote is from an interview with him published in *American Cinematographer:* "I had become obsessed with the cliché of the blue sky. They look too pretty—especially in a film that's supposed to be very dramatic. Naturally, when you're shooting out on the desert or up in the mountains you've got a lot of blue sky. I tried my best to get rid of this by over-exposing the film radically and forcing the laboratory to print it back. This pales out the blue to something soft and light, and I could stomach that. Also, it's easier and faster to work this way because you don't need any booster lights when you over-expose the film. There's no need to fill the shadows because you've already exposed far beyond what the normal exposure for shadows would be." Hall used the same "washed-out" approach throughout *Tell Them Willie Boy is Here.*

Spare change dept. . . . A final note for people with money to spend. A **TV projector** which shoots a 9x12' image is available from Visual Information Products, Inc. For mind blowing TV it's only $3,095.

Jeff Schrank, Box 5139, Chicago, Ill. 60680

Jeff Schrank edits *Media Mix,* a monthly newsletter for educators dealing with media and education. He also contributes regular columns to *Religion Teacher's Journal, Today's Parish* and *Media & Methods.* He serves as a media consultant to a Chicago-based publisher, has edited four texts, and writes books (*Media in Value Education,* Argus Press, Chicago, 1970).

PARIS LETTER

GEOFFREY MINISH

Most new French films are released between September and June, it being an

article of faith in the French film industry that people don't go to movies in summertime. The 1970-71 season looks like being a dismal one, judging by the following fall releases:

La Modification—Michel Butor's novel must be difficult, probably impossible, material for a film, and debutant Michel Worms has junked everything from the book except the tricky time-shifts and the banal plot about the man on the Paris-Rome train who intends to abandon his wife and bring his mistress back to Paris, but who has second thoughts en route. It all comes out as pure Anatole Litvak. French directors can turn out this sort of thing with their eyes shut, and that's a good way to watch it, too.

La Rupture—Claude Chabrol's latest, based on a Charlotte Armstrong novel, has Stéphane Audran trying to divorce her crazed, rich-boy husband, while her father-in-law (Michel Bouquet), determined to gain custody of his grandchild, hires no-good Jean-Pierre Cassel to frame Miss Audran on an immorality charge. Cassel cooks up a scheme involving the lesbian seduction of a mentally-retarded teenage girl. There's a Grand Guignol climax in which Miss Audran's nutty spouse throws his mother downstairs, is in turn stabbed to death by Cassel, and Miss Audran goes mad. All of which might be less nasty if there were any signs Chabrol believed for a single moment in what he was putting on the screen. When the film is released in Britain and North America, nevertheless, we can expect the usual critical rhapsodies about Chabrol's acute sense of evil.

La Maison des Bories—In its tiny way, as cynical as **La Rupture**. Jacques Doniol-Valcroze makes a big thing out of being a man of the Left, but his film, as cliché-riddled as a newspaper editorial, is a celebration of bourgeois marriage and the virtues of sexual self-restraint. It's the one about the youth who falls in love with the professor's wife, the big twist being that they never make it to bed. Instead, emotion-torn heroine, alone in her bedroom, does a Joan Crawford: flattens herself against the door. Must be that New Romanticism we are threatened with.

Footnotes; Mercure de France has published the screenplays of François Truffaut's four Antoine Doinel films—**The 400 Blows,** the sketch in **L'Amour A Vingt Ans, Stolen Kisses** and **Domicile Conjugale.** Truffaut says he won't be making any more Doinel movies, and in fact won't be making movies of any kind for the next year or so. He intends to occupy himself with literary projects, which include completing Andre Bazin's book on Jean Renoir...Why did Jean-Luc Godard sign that contract to make advertising commercials for the Paris Cinéma et Publicité company? Rumor gives the obvious reason: he's broke...Film Francais, the French trade weekly, reports that Czechoslovak director Vojtech Jasny has gone to live in Austria. Jasny, an extremely retiring juror at the 1970 Cannes Festival, won a Cannes prize in 1969 for **Chronique Morave**. (The Czechoslovak title escapes me, but I understand the literal English translation is "The Good Guys From My Home Town.") The film was subsequently banned in Czechoslovakia, presumably because of its anti-Stalinist line. I hope some Czechoslovak Langlois has got a copy stashed away somewhere: it's a beautiful piece of work, much too good to lose.

Geoffrey Minish is a Canadian freelance writer based in Paris.

HOW? 5

by DAVID DORFMAN

Though video-tape recording is not new — its use has been long established in commercial television—it has only recently become practical for the independent film-maker. Video-tape is important in two ways: it is a unique image and sound recording medium, capable of doing things film cannot do and it is becoming a reasonable alternative to film where theatrical exhibition or projection in an auditorium is not intended. I don't think video-tape is the successor to film, but many film-makers may find it more suited to at least some of their needs than film.

In general principle video-tape is no different than sound recording on ¼" magnetic tape. The camera analyzes the image into a pattern of electrical impulses which is converted into a magnetic pattern on the tape. Synchronized sound is also used for playback. Playback is through a monitor, which is basically a T.V. set. (Though specially built monitors are best, and not particularly expensive, any T.V. set can be used for this purpose via an adapter.)

TAPE WIDTHS

Because the magnetic pattern needed to record an image is more complex than that needed to record sound, the normal ¼" tape used for sound recording is not big enough. Video recording tape is ½", 1", 1½", and 2" wide. The larger the tape, the better the quality of the image. T.V. stations usually use tape 1" or bigger and the 1½" and the 2" are necessary for adequate color.

The equipment using ½" tape is the only kind that an independent film-maker is likely to afford. The image quality is about equal to the average live T.V. broadcast. It is essentially a monochrome (b&w) medium, at least where actual filming is concerned—color cameras start at $10,000, and the quality is modest.

David Dorfman, with an MA in English and a checkered background in and out of filmmaking, lives and works in New York.

THE CANADIAN FILM DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION
ANNOUNCES THE FOLLOWING FEATURE FILMS ARE NOW IN RELEASE

Title	Director	Distributor
RED	Gilles Carle	Cinépix Inc., Montreal
THE TRAGIC DIARY OF ZERO THE FOOL	Morley Markson	Film Canada Presentations Limited, Toronto
LA CHAMBRE BLANCHE	Jean-Pierre Lefebvre	Faroun Films (Canada) Limitée, Montreal
FLICK	Gilbert Taylor	Glen Warren Productions Limited, Toronto
CRIMES OF THE FUTURE	David Cronenberg	New Cinema of Canada, Toronto
A SOIR ON FAIT PEUR AU MONDE	François Brault & Jean Dansereau	Les Cinéastes Associés Inc., Montreal
GOIN' DOWN THE ROAD	Donald Shebib	Phoenix Films Inc., Toronto
A MARRIED COUPLE	Allan King	Phoenix Films Inc., Toronto
EXPLOSION	Jules Bricken	International Film Distributors, Toronto
DEUX FEMMES EN OR	Claude Fournier	France Film Company, Montreal
L'INITIATION	Denis Heroux	Cinépix Inc., Montreal
LOVE IN A FOUR-LETTER WORLD	John Sone	Cinépix Inc., Montreal
ACT OF THE HEART	Paul Almond	Universal Pictures Company Inc.
NEON PALACE	Peter Rowe	Film Canada Presentations Limited, Toronto

archive 2021

SHOOTING EQUIPMENT

A video recording set-up consists of a camera, microphone and recorder. Cameras weigh from 6-14 pounds and can be used without a tripod. Since it has no moving parts, the camera is noiseless and a microphone can be used close to camera, even mounted on it, making it relatively simple for one person to record sound and image. No sync marks or post-shooting process is needed. Though special lenses are available, most video cameras can also use C-mount lenses.

Battery operated recorders are available. They weigh 18-20 lbs. and can be carried over the shoulder or like a pack. They record up to 30 minutes on one reel. Non-battery-operated recorders in the ½" class weigh 30-60 lbs. They usually record 60 minutes on one reel. Since the camera is connected to the recorder by a cable, these machines offer a fair amount of mobility on a single location. All recorders are capable of recording a T.V. broadcast, though a monitor or specially adapted set is required for this purpose. A few more expensive machines will record color broadcasts with moderate image quality.

Video recording is generally easier than even silent filming. The ease in recording sync sound has already been mentioned, but this is not the only reason. The viewfinder, for example, shows the image that is actually being recorded, exactly as it will appear when played back, making exposure and evaluation of high-lights and shadows a simple matter. Video recording can be done at low light levels without loss of quality, which makes lighting necessary only to create high-lights and shadows. No development is required and the image is instantly available for replay, which in many situations eliminates the need to shoot extensive covering footage.

EDITING

Video-tape can be edited by transfer, a wholly electronic process which involves no physical cutting of the original tapes. A schematic version of such an editing unit would consist of two video recorders (with monitors, which have the same function as the picture heads of a movieola), set to playback. They each produce a signal which can be recorded on a third recorder. However, the signals do not go directly to the third machine but first through a switching device, which allows the editor to decide which signal will be transferred to the third tape. Thus "cutting" from a shot on the first tape to a shot on the second tape is literally a matter of flicking a switch. The basic switching device is simple and not expensive. However more sophisticated setups include special effects generators, which allow the editor to add, again electronically, effects such as wipes, fades, super-impositions, negative for positive.

Transfer editing lends itself to experimentation, because it is easy to try an effect or editing combination, which in turn can be erased if it is not satisfactory. Another advantage of transfer editing is that the final result is not a work-print, but a visual track ready for showing or duplication, which is done by simple transfer. It is also possible to physically cut the tape, but besides being cumbersome, this process is really only satisfactory for assembling scenes and shots.

COSTS

Some approximate prices will be helpful. The cheapest video camera w/recorder is about $1,000, the cheapest portable unit about $1,500. A basic two track editing facility is about $1,500, and a special effects generator about $500. Thus, the basic equipment for video recording is $3,000-$4,000 at present retail prices. Though this sum is not small, it is not out of line with the price of 16mm semi-professional equipment, especially when one considers that the above set-up frees the film-maker from dependence on labs or related editing facilities. Most of the items required for a video recording set-up can be bought separately, allowing the cost to be spread out over time.

It should be noted that not all video recording equipment is compatible because the exact shape of the magnetic pattern on the tape (the scanning pattern) differs from manufacturer to manufacturer. Recently a standard scanning pattern (EJAI-1) has been adopted by all Japanese manufacturers and is likely to become standard throughout the ½" field, though at the present time the only brand available in North America which employs the new standard is Sony.

The cost of recording is really the cost of the tape—presently about $.70 per minute. The cost of producing a 16mm b&w workprint with sync sound is about $2.75 per minute. Comparable savings exist in producing the final answer print and a moderate number of copies. Video-tape can be erased and reused like any magnetic recording medium.

FILM AND TAPE COMPARED

Film still has several advantages over tape as an image-recording medium. The first is that film provides access to color; even though several manufacturers are proposing a relatively inexpensive color camera (i.e. relative to $10,000), the possibilities of ½" tape as a color medium are distinctly limited, at least for the 70s. The second advantage of film is that it produces sharper and more detailed images, a capacity which ½" tape is unlikely to equal. A third advantage is that film can be projected on fairly large screens, while the screen of even a large monitor is still relatively small. For this reason certain kinds of shots—e.g. long shots, master shots needing depth focus, etc.—are not usually practical.

In themselves, none of the above advantages of film (or the previously discussed advantages of video-tape) are of overriding importance—they may make one medium superior to the other for a particular film-maker, just as the differences between painting and sculpture can make one or the other medium best for an individual artist, but not for all artists.

What is important is the economic advantage these technical differences give to film. A film shot in 16mm can be shown via any electronic process (T.V., cable T.V., video-tape, home-play cassettes, etc.). It can also be shown in even a large auditorium or reduced to Super-8 or blown up to 35mm for theatrical distribution. On the other hand video-tape can only be shown via electronic processes. In other words, it is harder for a work in video-tape to make money and money is necessary for a film-maker to carry on his work.

This situation may change with the expansion of pay cable T.V. and home play video cassettes (which play through a T.V. set via an adapter). Though film still would have an advantage in image quality it would be smaller and much less decisive. The real expansion of this field will not take place before the middle 70s.

It should be added that there are a large number of applications—e.g. experimentation and demos—where no distribution is intended, in which the flexibility and economy of tape are distinct assets.

Persons interested in exploring the field of electronic media may be interested in a new "magazine", RADICAL SOFTWARE, 51 5th Avenue, Rm. 11D, N.Y., 10003.

LETTER FROM N.Y.C.

BOB COWAN

One of the more surprising aspects of the New York Film Festival this year was the inclusion in its main program of the non-narrative structural film **Zorns Lemma** by Hollis Frampton. One can only hope that the programming of the following year will include more from the experimental non-narrative field. (As usual the Festival contained a combination of God-awful and excellent films. The worst as exemplified by Marcel Hanouns' **Une Simple Histoire** and the best by Kjell Gredes' **Harry Munter.**)

Zorns Lemma is the kind of film that can only be judged properly if one is first of all willing to accept the basic concept of it and let it unfold on its own terms. After a few minutes one can easily decide if the time is right to take this journey or to leave it alone. To remain viewing it while resisting its basic characteristics is to deny the possibility of it ever becoming a part of an experience for you at all. I mean, if you don't like the sound of a violin, it won't make any difference it the music being played is either good or bad. At that point you have to forget about any musical judgement until you can somehow reconcile yourself to the actual characteristic sound of the violin.

The film is in three parts. In the first five-minute section we hear a woman's voice reciting from the Bay State Primer (circa 1800) in rhymed couplets without any visual accompaniment. The second section, the main body of the film, lasts 45 minutes. It consists of a continuous series of one-second cuts (24 frames) of

Bob Cowan (**Soul Freeze**, etc.) is a prize-winning New York independent filmmaker and a regular contributor to *Take One*.

several thousand words (no plurals). Each shot is a word seen in its natural environment, from street signs to grafitti, and each shot has a precise visual impact as it passes by. There is no sound. The final section shows a man, woman and a dog walking through a wide expanse of snow, away from the camera. The sound track returns and takes up the one-second beat that the previous word image had followed and we hear the voices of seven women reading, one word at a time, from a medieval text on light and form.

During the long word-images section of the film there is a counter rhythm at work, a series of progressive images to interrupt the metronomic rhythm of the one-second visual pulse. These are images of fire, the rolling sea, a smoking chimney, waving grass, a man painting a wall, black leader, popcorn popping, multiple images of a man bouncing a ball, a meat grinder, a female face (Frampton's wife) split image, hands opening a tangerine, street lights, a man walking, the shadow of a fire escape, hands being washed under a tap, a girl on a swing, hands working with a construction toy, hands doing a collage painting, hands turning the pages of a book, a tree, a man changing a tire on a car, the breaking of an egg, a sunlight rainbow flare, hands tying shoelaces, a rhinoceros, a pelican. These sections are actually short films and are cut throughout the film in small fragments at a time. They give the illusion of being repeats but in actuality nothing is repeated. They have another effect as well. When the images of words pass by, one cannot help but read them all at first, until finally they start to appear as only pictorial shapes, at which point the short films interrupt for a few seconds. This interruption tends to make you continue to read the words again. The silence of this main section is a musical silence; the visual word-images punctuated by visuals-without-words, back and forth, almost making the total image effect seem audible.

There is a fantastic discipline at work in this film, a kind of technical and intellectual discipline sadly lacking in most minimal and structural films I have seen, although **Zorns Lemma** could hardly be called minimal. Each image is a precisely shot fragment of a larger mosaic. A sense of the inevitable accumulates as the film progresses and, as the onlooker's reading of the words becomes less and less, the film seems to actually speed up, whereas in fact the images remain the same length.

The section of narration at the beginning (prologue to the experience) and the ending (sounds of timed words take the place of the previous timed images) are used to flatten the circular curve of the main section, to in fact allow it to proceed along a straight path.

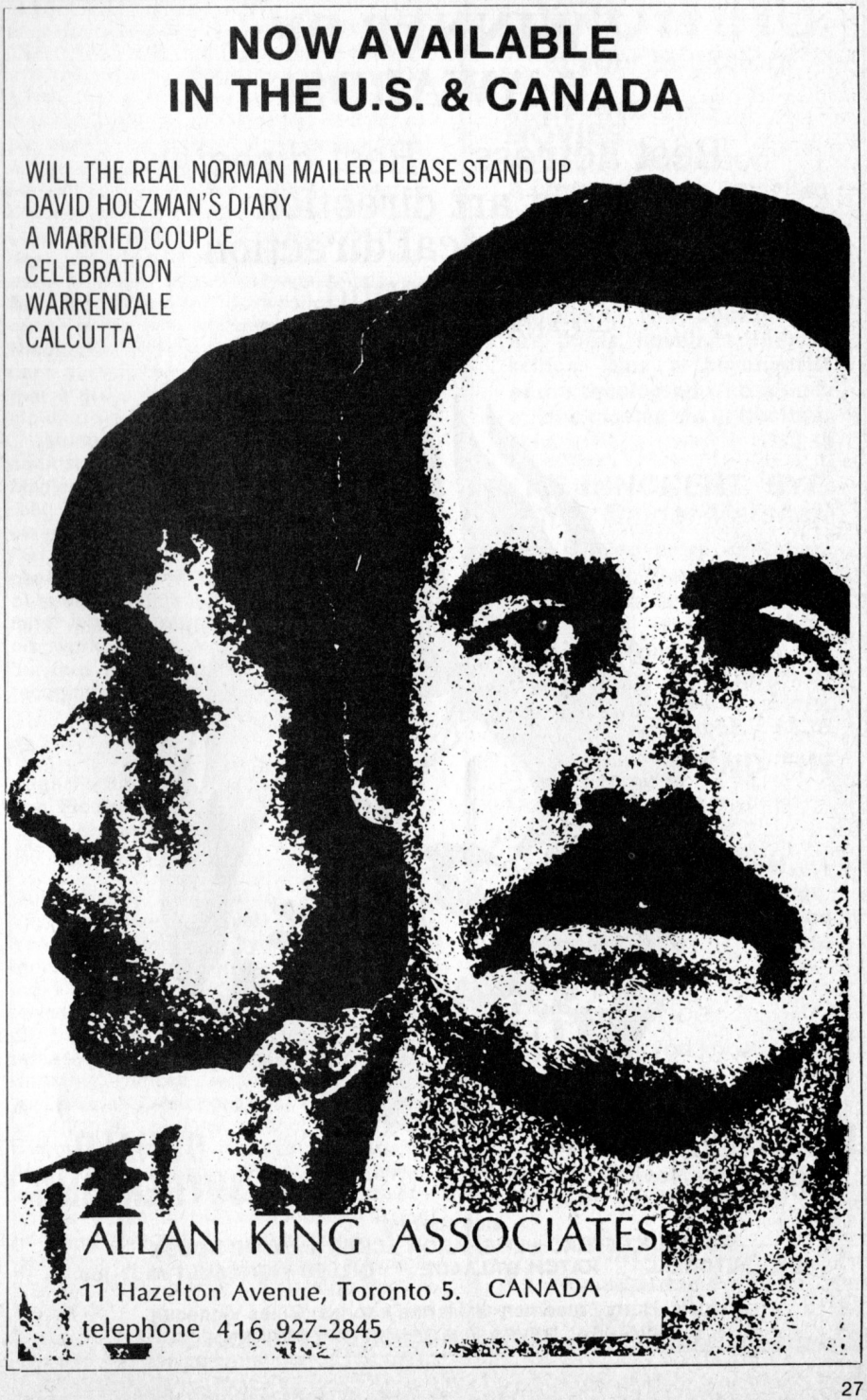
The ending sound consists of words spoken to the ticking of a metronome, each word in the narration spoken in turn by seven different women. The image of the man, woman and dog walking away from the camera through the snow to a forest beyond is the silence of the previous soundless 45 minutes made visual while the pulse-word narration track is the sound equivalent of the previous 45 minutes' visuals. The film could be carefully and mathematically dissected into its various components and enjoyed on that level, but I prefer to react to it as if it were a kind of musical experience. I consider it a very classic and strong structural film.

A word about Hollis Frampton. Frampton was born in Wooster, Ohio in 1936. His pre-movie days were spent as a still photographer (for about ten years). His first film was called **Process Red** (1966), after which followed **Information** (1966), **Manual of Arms** (1966), **Heterodyne** (1967), **Snow-Blind** (1967), **States** (1967), **Maxwell's Demon** (1966), **Palindrome** (1969), **Lemon** (1969), **Carrots and Peas** (1969), **Prince Rupert's Drops** (1969), **Works and Days** (1969), and **Artificial Light** (1969). **Zorns Lemma** was made in 1970.

BOOKS

An amalgamation and updating of the fine monographs available previously via the Dearborn Public Library, **Four Aspects of the Film** by James L. Limbacher (Brussel and Brussel, 18 East 12th St., New York 10003. 386 pp., $7.95) is a meticulous, exhaustive and absolutely definitive chronicle of the history of color, wide-screen, 3-D, and sound developments in the cinema. The result of twen-

Glen Hunter's latest for Toronto's poverty row Sedore Studios is **The Chamber**, a real change of pace for him, as he doesn't get to swim in this one at all.



ty years careful research, I know of no other volume which contains so much accurate documentation of its subjects. Certainly one is amazed at the number and scope of the often very early attempts to add new dimensions and even smell to the screen, and every technical advance is detailed here. Several long appendices list chronologically the films made in each new process. Bravo to Mr. Limbacher for clearing the paths in a jungle of facts and providing us with a noteworthy addition to film scholarship. Very highly recommended.

German film history from the First World War to the end of the second is detailed in two complimentary volumes. Lotte Eisner's magnificent study of the matchless German silent film (**The Haunted Screen;** Expressionism in the German cinema and the influence of Max Reinhardt. Thames and Hudson 360 pp., 4/4s. In Canada: Oxford Univ. press, $16.95. In U.S.: Univ. of California, $10.95) is at long last available in a serviceable English translation enhanced by lavish illustrations (though not, I think, as well reproduced here as in the second French edition). Miss Eisner succeeds in placing the glorious achievement of these films within the larger context of contemporary artistic and theatrical expressionism in Germany and deftly traces the important inter-relationships.

David Stewart Hull's **Film in the Third Reich** (University of California Press, 291 pp., $8.95) is a real pioneer achievement, in English at least, and entirely commendable for the careful tone he maintains in dealing with material so prone to hysterical treatment. The Nazi emasculation and prostitution of the German film industry is not a pleasant story, but Hull makes it a fascinating one, correcting many earlier falsifications. He's viewed as many of the relevant films as still exist, interviewed numerous survivors of the period, and researched every possible source of information. An important book on a shameful segment of film history.

For those who might want some background on the subject, Informatics (49 Lordship Lane, London, S.E.22) offer at $2.50 M. Khan's **An Introduction to the Egyptian Cinema.** Most interesting to North American readers for the section on the early career of Omar Sharif, it also offers a rather rough and ready English style and murky illustrations. Still worthwhile though.

Philip French's **The Movie Moguls;** an informal history of the Hollywood tycoons (Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 170 pp., 42s. In Canada: Ryerson Press, $8.50) is a good account of the moulders of Hollywood as we knew it and as such is a valuable addition to the still pitifully small number of really reliable books on either the individuals here covered or the studios they founded. Primarily aimed at the general reader, the cinema-buff can still glean a great deal of good solid history here. Good illustrations.

Whether Parker Tyler would actually thank Gore Vidal for his recent renaissance is doubtful, nevertheless he should be grateful in some small measure. **Sex, Psyche, Etcetera in the Film** (Horizon Press, 239 pp., $7.50. In Canada; Smithers and Bonellie, $9.75) is his sixth book on the cinema, and while hardly a completely rounded argument on its presumed subjects, it does offer a heady experience, and as they say, much food for thought. Actually it's not quite as impenetrable as some of Tyler's musings, and while in reality a grab-bag of earlier articles, most are worthy of their re-appearance here.

Speaking of **Myra Breckinridge,** her **Cookbook,** compiled by Howard Austen and Beverly Pepper has recently appeared (Little, Brown, 344 pp., $3.95. In Canada: $4.75). A bit much? Just a little, though the recipes are fun, the numerous illustrations more so (even when wrongly captioned), and the whole package just a camp kitchen delight.

And speaking of collections of articles, how about a full fifteen months worth of Pauline Kael's reprinted *New Yorker* criticisms? **(Going Steady,** Little, Brown, 304pp., $6.95. In Canada: $8.50.) The experience of being a steady weekly critic has done the lady a great deal of good, and makes this collection—curiously enough—one of her most worthwhile, despite the limitations of coverage. Certainly better than her last.

Sergei Eisenstein's **Film Essays and a Lecture,** edited by Jay Leyda (Praeger, 220 pp., $6.95 and $2.95) has been available in England for some years now, so praise to Praeger for its issue here. Again a gathering of fugitive pieces not previously translated, it includes several necessary additions to the canon of Eisenstein's aesthetic pronouncements. A detailed bibliography of his published works

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and their English translations forms a valuable appendix.

Three important directors, and a first book dealing with each of them. **George Stevens: an American romantic,** by Donald Richie (Museum of Modern Art, 104 pp. $2.50. In Canada: Intext, $3.00) is notable for a goodly number of seldom-reproduced production stills, and, I'm afraid, for a rather strained attempt to elucidate themes and trends in Stevens' work, which just doesn't offer a satisfying analysis of his career. I honour Stevens' work highly and while it's great to finally have a book about him, would it were better.

Pasolini on Pasolini (interviews with Oswald Stack) is a good introduction to the corpus of this director's strange and powerful works. Beautifully reproduced illustrations, as in all *Cinema One* volumes only add to one's frustration in being able to view, in Canada, at this point, only two of this master's films.

Tom Milne's **Mamoulian** is a rapturously enthusiastic traversal of the work of this most elegant of cinemagicians. I adore Mamoulian's films, and even when Milne goes absolutely overboard in his analyses, I'm almost with him. A must for fans: a good argument for the unconverted. (See also Thomas Atkins's review following.)

Jim Kitses is almost as rapturous anent the Western films of Anthony Mann, Budd Boetticher and Sam Peckinpah in his **Horizons West,** but I remain firmly unconverted to his particular enthusiasms, despite his persuasive arguments, although it's an essential for Western buffs. (Above three titles: Thames and Hudson, 30s and 15s. In Canada: Oxford University Press, $5.95 and $2.95. In U.S.: Indiana Univ. Press, $5.95 and $2.25.)

I'm sorry not to have noted Charles Barr's **Laurel and Hardy** before this (Studio Vista, 10/6; Univ. of California Press, $1.95). It's a really excellent analysis of the boys' work, and a close study of any comedy style is difficult, in the sense that what's funny is apt to absolutely evaporate under too strong a light. Well illustrated and documented. A must, even for an almost persuaded non-fan like me.

And finally, don't overlook good old F. Maurice Speed's **Film Review** for 1969-70 (Barnes, $6.95. In Canada: Smithers and Bonellie, $9.25), going strong since 1944 and recently updated in presentation. Fairly full details of the films released in Britain in the previous year, good illustrations, and several special articles make it a good reference volume.

Glen Hunter

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Tom Milne, **Mamoulian**, 176 pp. *Cinema One* series, number thirteen. In U.S.: Indiana University Press, $5.95 and $2.25. In Canada: Oxford University Press, $5.95 and $2.95.

Tom Milne, Associate Editor of *Sight and Sound,* has written an excellent critical introduction to the film career of Russian-born director Rouben Mamoulian, now in his seventies and remembered by film historians chiefly for the technical innovations in his early works: the imaginative, unconventional use of camera and sound track in such films as **Applause** (1929), **Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde** (with Fredric March, 1931) and **Queen Christina** (with Greta Garbo, 1933); and the theatrical use of color in **Becky Sharp** (1935). In his careful examination of all sixteen of Mamoulian's films (his last was **Silk Stockings,** 1957), Milne acknowledges the significance of his technical experiments but argues that the director's real importance in American cinema is as a "witty, elegant, supremely stylish" artist whose films are distinguished by "their unerring sense of rhythm in exploring the sensuous pleasures of movement."

Although Mamoulian's background was in theatre—he studied at the Moscow Art Theatre under Vakhtangov and staged the original Broadway productions of such successes as *Porgy and Bess, Oklahoma!,* and *Carousel*—he displayed a remarkable gift for thinking in cinematic terms. His mastery of motion—both the motion of the camera and the motion of his subject—and his ability to integrate all the elements of the medium into what he called "one stylized rhythmic pattern" are particularly evident in his musicals: **Love Me Tonight** (1932), **Summer Holiday** (1947, based on O'Neill's *Ah, Wilderness!)* and **Silk Stockings.** Although **Silk Stockings** was dismissed by most critics as an inferior version of Lubitsch's **Ninotchka,** Milne praises the film as a brilliant achievement, "so rich in invention that it gives the lie . . . to the myth of Mamoulian's decline."

Milne's study is an effective protest against studio and critical neglect of Mamoulian during the later part of his career. Mamoulian's art, as this book makes clear, was continually developing, and his "retirement" from Hollywood at the peak of his creativity was a sad waste of talent. In 1968 he was honored in England with a retrospective devoted to his work at the National Film Theatre, but thus far he has received little public recognition in his own country.

Thomas R. Atkins

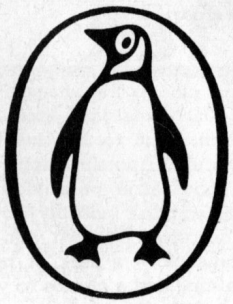
●

Hugh Fordin (ed.), **1970 Yearbook of Motion Pictures and Television,** Arno Press (330 Madison Avenue, NYC 10017), 1075 pp., $25.00.

Quite simply the bible of the industry, this fifty-second annual edition of the **Yearbook** (produced by *Film TV Daily)* includes all the regular features that make it a must purchase for anyone interested in, or involved with, films: lists of theatrical and non-theatrical films released during 1969; credits of producers, directors, actors, writers, etc.; bibliographies of film books; list of personnel of all film production and distribution companies around the world; Academy Award winners since 1928; lists of associations, theatre chains, press representatives; a cumulative alphabetical listing of some 33,000 films issued since 1915 (with distributors' names and information on title changes); etc., etc., etc. Need I say more?

Foster Stackhouse

Thomas Atkins is a former John Golden Fellow in playwriting at the Yale School of Drama and his plays, stories and articles have been widely published. He is now Associate Professor of Drama at Hollins College, Virginia.



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CHICAGO LETTER

DON KLUGMAN

Obviously the cinema has changed since the 1930s and 40s. Those were times when the average person went to the movies to see artifacts he couldn't possibly hope to own — to have a good laugh or a good cry over situations he couldn't possibly hope to experience. The screen brought him suspense, mystery, romance — a peek at beautifully-designed clothing and a chance to vicariously capture the feeling of being a spy — a member of a secret military organization; to drive a sports car, travel to Marakesh, be shot at by sundry criminals and to bathe in a marble tub with brass faucet handles.

Today it's different. Thanks to mass production and easy credit almost anyone can have the clothing and the cars; for suspense and danger there are protests and sit-ins; for secret political action one can join the Black Panthers, there are pay-later trips abroad and LSD; spectacular trials occur every day at your local courthouse, and Sears has marble tubs with brass handles listed right there in the catalog.

So who needs movies like the movies we used to have?

One answer is that there are people who prefer not to participate in the action on the streets. Some have been trained to express their opinions in bars and at parties but to remain quiet when it counts. They're able to complain about bad politics but afraid to sign a petition; able to travel around the world but afraid they'll find bad-tasting water, smelly toilets, people who don't speak English, or — much worse — people who speak it the way Harold Pinter writes it. For such people certain films provide a return to sanity and order; films like *Funny Girl, Gidget Goes to Hollywood, Thoroughly Modern Millie,* and *The Son of Flubber.*

This audience is shrinking. It's being worn away by the more intrusive mediocrity of television, by education, by a growing interest in hockey and by death. It's an essentially passive audience that seldom speaks out on matters of taste. It's an audience that goes to the cinema to see the only sort of mediocrity that's still not available on television: skin flicks.

And so we have this precious phenomenon: a passive generation of one-time Robert Young fans goes once a year to see Streisand in a musical, once again to see Fred MacMurray in something harmless by Disney and hits the corner art house once a month, even once a week, to see whatever nudies Audubon Films or Russ Meyer may have to offer.

But, interestingly, another audience is growing — an audience that, for want of better words, I'll call a youthful audience, though age is beside the point. This audience not only is disunified in matters of taste, but it includes a number of subgroups with vastly different tastes. It includes activists — mostly liberals and radicals. It includes people who have studied film history and production in school but who have escaped to more sensible professions and trades. It includes the hip, the strung out, eggheads, potheads and the grease; and it includes a vast group of thinking people who have grown up watching film, who have appreciated the medium since childhood; who are consciously or unconsciously aware that film has many forms — embodies many styles; that a particular film is an artifact — a product of the men and women who have made it. This audience sees film as something more than a diversion between dinnertime and bedtime — this audience realizes that film *is*.

About the disunity of this young audience: knowing film — having lived with it all their lives — some people have developed a taste for the small theatre, for chamber-films, for the cinematheque of Kenneth Anger, Stan Brakhage, Andy Warhol, the Kuchar brothers, even Jonas Mekas. Others are very heavily into westerns, science fiction, the films of Kurasawa, Fellini, Sergio Leone or Haskell Wexler — films scripted by Harold Pinter and directed by Joseph Losey — films about war, peace, drugs, motorcycles — the acting of Dirk Bogarde, Gale Sondergard, Peter Fonda or Akim Tamiroff. Among them are people who believe that Orson Welles *was* greater than he *is, is* greater than he *was*, or who couldn't care less. Disregarding the direction of taste or opinion, the fact is that among these people taste and opinion *exist*; discussion and argument can happen. To them a film theatre is something more than a place to go for a good laugh, a good cry, or a good box of popcorn.

I've emphasized disunity; yet very often a particular film may unify this youthful audience: a film like *Bonnie and Clyde — Easy Rider — Z*. What films these are; how good it is to know they exist and to see them; how good to realize that they offer equally great rewards to intellectuals and film theorists, to star-worshippers, the politically minded, to film students and the sensation-minded. How great it is to be here now, when films like these are being made!

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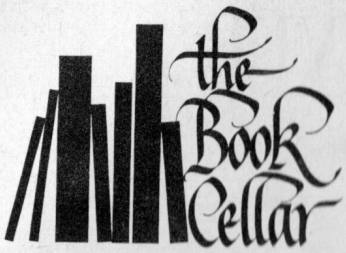

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